



Patient & Family Guide
2019

Exercises After Foot or Toe Injury



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Exercises After Foot or Toe Injury

You may now move your foot and/or toe. You may feel discomfort when you first start the exercises. This is normal. You may have some bruising or swelling in your ankle and/or foot. This will get better over time.

What will happen after my cast/bandage is taken off?

Swelling

- Your foot may be bruised or swollen.
- Swelling may continue for months.
- The amount of swelling may change throughout the day.

To lessen swelling:

- Raise your leg when resting, so that your foot is above the level of your heart.
- Bend your ankle and point your foot often.
- If you have been given a compression stocking:
 - › wear it during the day; take it off to do your exercises and overnight.
- Raise your foot at night by putting pillows under your leg or by putting a pillow under your mattress at the end of the bed.

- Use ice (see page 3).
- Start massaging your scar when told by your physiotherapist; it must be well-healed (the incision (cut) must be closed).

Stiffness

- Foot and/or toe stiffness is common.
- Start moving your foot and/or toe to help get the movement back in your joints as told by your physiotherapist.
- You may feel discomfort when you first start the exercises. This will go away over time, as your foot and/or toes become more flexible.

Walking

- Your doctor or physiotherapist will tell you how much weight you may put on your foot, and the type of walking aid to use (e.g., cane, crutches), if needed.
- When you start walking, you will put more weight on the outside of your foot. As your pain gets better, you will be able to put more weight on the inside of your foot. Then you will be able to push off your big toe.
- Walk as much as you can. Let pain and swelling be your guide.

Heat and ice

- Use heat (e.g., hot pack, hot water bottle, soak in warm water) for about 15 minutes before exercising to help loosen up your foot and/or toe.
 - › Note: The incision needs to be well-healed (closed) and not infected before using heat or soaking in water.
- Use ice (e.g., gel pack, bag of frozen vegetables) for about 15 minutes after exercising to help control pain in your foot and/or toe.

Spacer

If you have a toe spacer, remove it to do your exercises.

Exercises

- It is important to hold the stretches for the full time to let your muscles stretch.
- Only do the exercises you have been asked to do.
- **Plan to do your exercises 3 times each day.**

Exercises

Move your toes up. Hold for 5 seconds. Relax.
Repeat _____ times.



Bend your toes down. Hold for 5 seconds. Relax.
Repeat _____ times.



Move your big toe out to the side, away from the rest of your toes. Hold for 5 seconds. Relax and return to starting position.

Repeat _____ times.



Stretching exercises

Sit in a chair. Bend the knee of your affected leg so that you can reach your toes. Keep the bottom of your toes still with one hand. Use your other hand to hold the end of your toe. Slowly bend your toe downwards until you feel a stretch. Hold for 10-30 seconds. Relax. Repeat _____ times.



Sit in a chair. Bend the knee of your affected leg so that you can reach your toes. Hold the end of your toe. Slowly bend your toe upwards until you feel a stretch. Hold for 10-30 seconds. Relax. Repeat _____ times.



Sit in a chair. Bend the knee of your affected leg so that you can reach your toes. Hold the end of your toe. Slowly bend the **tip** of your toe downwards until you feel a stretch. Hold for 10-30 seconds. Relax. Repeat _____ times.



What are your questions?

Please ask. We are here to help you.

Strengthening exercises

Put a towel on the floor in front of a chair. Sit in the chair. Place your heel on the floor and the ball of your affected foot on the towel. Grasp the towel with your toes, bunching the towel. Hold for 5 seconds. Relax.

Repeat _____ times.



Sit in a chair. Raise your heel up while keeping your toes flat on the floor, and pushing your toes down. Hold for 10-30 seconds. Slowly lower your heel back down and relax.

Repeat _____ times.



Stand facing something stable (e.g., kitchen counter, chair) and hold on with both hands. Using both feet, rise up onto your toes. Hold for 5 seconds, then slowly lower.

Repeat _____ times.



Progression: When you are feeling stronger, stand only on your affected foot and rise up on your toes. Hold for 5 seconds, then slowly lower.

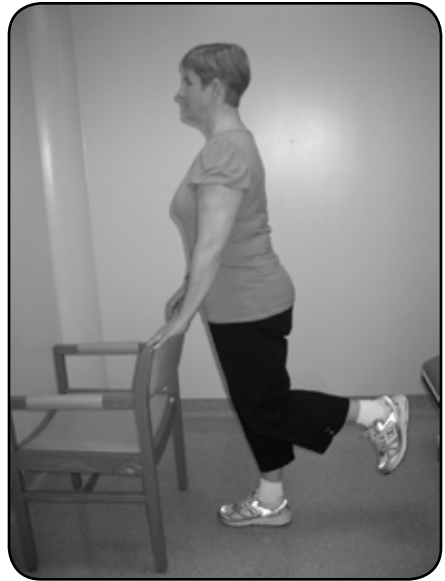
Repeat _____ times.



Balance exercises

Stand facing something stable (e.g., kitchen counter, chair) and hold on with both hands. Stand on your affected foot. Hold for 15-20 seconds. Relax.

Repeat _____ times.



Progressions

- As your leg gets stronger, decrease the amount of support you use to help you balance on one leg. Try:
 - › fingertip support with 2 hands
 - › using only one hand for support
 - › not using any hands for support
- When your balance has improved and you can balance on one leg without support, try balancing with your eyes closed.

Notes:

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Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.