

Healthy Ankle Program for Tennis

Tennis is a game that requires sudden front to back and side to side movements that can place significant stress to the ankle joint. It is easy to understand why the ankle is at risk for injury. Most ankle injuries occur with a single event but others can happen over time. Muscle/tendon strains and ligament sprains can cause pain that varies depending upon the severity of the injury. Initially, pain may be present after playing tennis but it can progress to pain during play and eventually to activities of daily living.

The key to a healthy ankle for tennis is to incorporate flexibility, balance and strength exercises into your weekly routine. Stretching the calf muscles can help improve ankle range of motion. Strength and balance exercises can also help the ankle tolerate the demands of quick start and stop movements during play. Always perform exercises within a zone of comfort.

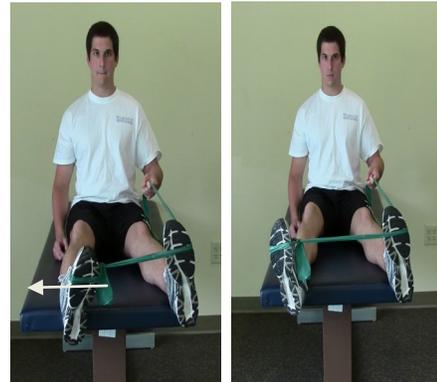
Gastroc Stretch: Stand with one leg in front. Allow front leg to bend at the knee as you lean forward into the wall keeping back leg straight. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat 4 times. Repeat for the other leg.



Soleus Stretch: Stand with one leg in front. Slightly bend both knees and lean forward into the wall. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat 4 times. Repeat for the other leg.



Eversion Strength: Place the loop of a band around the foot then pull it around the other foot and hold in your hand. Pull your foot with the loop out and up. Pause for a 1-2 count and perform 3 sets of 10 repetitions. Repeat for the other leg.



Single Leg Balance: Stand on one leg with the knee slightly bent. Move racquet overhead and then down to floor while maintaining balance. Perform 10 times and repeat for the other leg.



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