Ankle Strengthening Exercises

SYDNEY FOOT CLINIC
PODIATRY | SURGERY | REHABILITATION

These exercises are designed to improve strength, stability and control around the ankle. They are suitable for rehabilitation after ankle sprains, chronic ankle instability, or as part of ongoing lower limb conditioning. Start gradually and progress as your symptoms and strength improve.

General advice

- Perform exercises in a pain-free range.
- Aim for good quality movement and control.
- Start with the recommended repetitions and progress as able.
- If you have a recent injury or surgery, please seek individual advice from your podiatrist or treating clinician.

1 Resisted Ankle Dorsiflexion



- Sit with your leg out straight.
- Loop a resistance band around the front of your foot and hold the other end.
- Pull your toes towards you, against the band.
- Move slowly and with control.

3 sets of 12–15 repetitions

2 Resisted Ankle Plantarflexion



- Sit with your leg out straight.
- Loop a resistance band around the front of your foot and hold the other end.
- Push your toes away from you, pointing down against the band.
- Move slowly and with control.

3 sets of 12–15 repetitions

3 Resisted Ankle Inversion



- Sit with your leg out straight and the band around the inside of your foot.
- Move your foot inwards against the band.
- Keep your knee still and control the movement.

3 sets of 12–15 repetitions

4 Resisted Ankle Eversion



- Sit with your leg out straight and the band around the outside of your foot.
- Move your foot outwards against the band.
- Keep your knee still and control the movement.

3 sets of 12–15 repetitions

5 Single Leg Heel Raises



- Stand on one leg, holding a wall or rail for balance.
- Rise up onto your toes as high as possible.
- Pause at the top, then slowly lower down.
- Keep your knee straight and control the movement.

3 sets of 8–15 repetitions

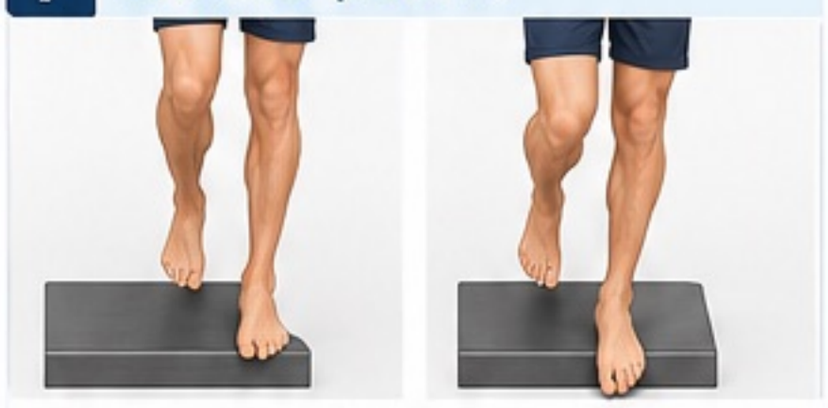
6 Eccentric Heel Raises



- Stand on one leg on a step.
- Use both legs to rise up, then slowly lower down on the affected leg only (3–5 seconds).
- Keep your knee straight and control the movement.

3 sets of 8–12 repetitions

7 Lateral Step Downs



- Stand on a step with one leg.
- Slowly bend your knee and lower the other heel towards the floor, keeping your knee aligned over your toes.
- Return to the start position.
- Focus on control and good alignment.

3 sets of 8–12 repetitions (each leg)

8 Single Leg Balance (Progressions)



- Stand on one leg with a slight bend in the knee.
- Aim to keep your hips level and knee aligned.
- Progress by standing on a cushion, then a wobble board, or by closing your eyes / adding gentle arm movements.

Hold fof 30–60 seconds, 3–5 repetitions

9 Dynamic Balance – Reach



- Stand on one leg with a slight bend in the knee.
- Reach forward, to the side and behind while keeping your balance.
- Keep your knee aligned and your foot stable.
- Try to maintain good control throughout.

3 sets of 5–8 reaches in each direction (each leg)

10 Hopping and Landing (Advanced)



- Perform small hops on the spot, then progress to forward/backward and side-to-side hops.
- Land softly on one leg with good control and knee alignment.
- Build up distance and speed as tolerated.

3 sets of 20–30 seconds

11 Agility / Direction Change (Advanced)



- Set up 3–5 cones and perform forward, backward and side-to-side movements.
- Focus on quick but controlled changes of direction.
- Keep your knees aligned and your foot stable on landing.

3 sets of 20–30 seconds

12 Incline / Decline Walking (Advanced)



- Walk up and down a ramp or sloped surface.
- Focus on controlled, stable foot placement.
- Progress to faster walking or light jogging as tolerated.

3 sets of 30–60 seconds