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# Fix Your Knee Pain

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To get started let's try some quick tests:

1. **Stand on your tiptoes.** Observe where the weight goes in your toes.
2. **Walk around a bit.** Notice where the weight is distributed in your foot as you do so. This may be really difficult to actually work out. As you heel strike and then move through to push off with the toes, the weight will roll through the foot in a certain manner. Is the weight predominantly on the inside, outside, or even across the whole foot?

When you stood on your tiptoes, did the weight shift onto your little toes?

When you walked, did your weight roll through the outside or inside of the foot?

If the answer to either of these questions is "yes," congratulations this is actually a good thing as we just identified some of the major factors causing your knee pain.

If, when you were on tiptoes, your weight shifted over on to your little toes, you have more strength in your little toe than your big toe. This makes your foot unstable and is a sure fire cause of knee pain.

If you walked on the outside or inside of your foot, it's a sign of instability in the foot. You should be walking with weight evenly distributed over the entire foot. Again this will be contributing to your knee pain.

If the limb below the knee is unstable the knee itself is forced to compensate by being more mobile. The knee is designed to be a stable, hinge joint and being too mobile causes problems as it forces it to shear and twist as it bends (rather than just hinge) to compensate for the instability in the limb below it.

So to fix your knee we first need to stabilise your lower limb. The best way to do this this is through calf raises...but not just any old calf raises.

## Performing A Calf Raise

Find a step; the steps in your house will do just great. Take your shoes off. (If you can't go barefoot for whatever reason, try to wear shoes with as thin a sole and as wide a front as possible; barefoot shoes are fine to wear.)

Stand with the meaty bit of your feet on the edge of the step with the feet running perpendicular to the front of the step. Hold onto the banister or another support (this is not a balance exercise, and you will need support).

Now with straight legs, remove one foot from the step so you are left standing on one leg.

Keeping the leg you are stood on straight, drop the heel of this foot down off the step; ideally, you should see the toes raise off the ground. Do not let the heel "screw" around to the inside as this happens, it should track down in a straight line.

Then when your heel is as low as it can realistically go, drive through the big toe and push the foot up until you are on tiptoes on that foot. Again ensure the heel tracks in a straight line without "screwing" around towards the inside.

As you push up, your weight should drive down through the pad of the foot just behind the big and index toe.

Imagine you are trying to squash a bug using the pad of your foot just behind the big and index toes. You should almost be able to lift the little toe off the ground as there is no weight on it.

The metatarsal bone (the ridge-like protrusion which forms the highest point of the foot) should be pointing straight down the gap between the big and index toes throughout the entire movement. The heel should track in a straight line up and down, without "screwing" to the inside.

If you're doing these right, you may only be able to perform a few with good form to start with; that's fine. It's a few more than you did yesterday and a great start.

### What You Should Feel

You should feel this right at that point where the head of the calf meets the tendon right in the centre of the calf. This will probably be harder than you expect it to be, perhaps a lot harder; that is a sign you're getting it right.

### How Many To Do?

The eventual goal is to perform 3 sets of 12 reps, 3 times a day.

However this is the goal not the starting point. You will likely have one side which is noticeably weaker than the other. Always start with this side. Do as many as you can up to the target of 12. Count how many you actually manage with good form. Then do exactly the same amount on your stronger side.

We want to build strength in the weaker side but also ensure the limbs are balanced so just smashing out 12 on your good side when you can only manage 4 on your weak side is not helping.

Your strong and weak side may flip after a few days of doing this, that is fairly normal and nothing to get worried about. Always start with what is currently presenting as the weaker side.

Once you can do 3 sets of 12 3 times a day fairly easily, you should be noticing a difference in your knee pain.

Build up to this.

To start with, you may only be able to perform 1 rep with good form while really helping yourself by leaning on something, this is fine! Take it slow and get it right. Form is much more important than reps here, when you can't do anymore with good form you are done for that set.

Remember we are aiming to get to 3 sets of 12 reps this isn't where you will necessarily start.

Practice every day.

Calves take a lot of hammering in everyday life so you may notice them aching a lot the next day. If this is the case and it's unbearable, take a day off and let them recover.

### **Need Help?**

If you feel you need help with fixing your knee pain I run a Pain Free Knees in 6 Weeks Challenge which does exactly what it says on the tin.

[You can check it out here >>](#)

### **Not Sure Your Doing Them Right?**

It is vital you get these right so go and do a few now and then come back and double-check you're doing them right by reading the next section.

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## How To Spot Incorrect Form When Performing A Calf Raise

You will, especially in the early stages, naturally favour the outside of the foot and your little toes as you push up in the calf raise. This will become more pronounced the higher towards your tiptoes you go.

How do you spot this? There are several clues I want you to look for to check if you're doing it wrong:

- The little toes will be firmly pushed into the floor, and the big toe will often actually raise off the floor. Drive the big toe into the step as if you were crushing a bug under it.
- The metatarsal bone will start to point outwards to the outside of the foot as the calf raises upwards. This may be a subtle shift and will become more obvious the higher up in the movement you go. Again, the cure here is to imagine you are crushing a bug under the big toe all the way through the movement.
- The heel will screw inwards towards the midline of the body to assist in shifting the weight to the outside of the foot. Keep the heel tracking in a straight line up and down throughout the movement.
- If you're wearing shoes (which I don't recommend), the crease formed in the front of the shoe should run at 90 degrees across the front of the shoe. If it is slightly angled, it means the weight is shifting out to the big toe.

### Struggling To Get The Full Height?

The calf naturally loses strength the higher in the calf raise you go. For this reason, you often see this weight shift outwards towards the top of the exercise. If you cannot prevent this from happening, then only raise up as far as you can with good form. You can build up to getting the calf raises higher as your strength improves.

### Why Form Is So Important

It is vital that you perform the calf raises with good form.

The main reason you're having problems is that your little toes are significantly stronger than your big toe. If you perform these exercises wrong and allow your weight to shift out to the little toes, you are building even more strength in them, making things worse.

It is infinitely better to do fewer repetitions but perform those you do with perfect form rather than try to do lots of reps and perform most of them wrong.

There are a few common issues I find with people so think of this next section as troubleshooting.

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# Common Issues

## Pain In The Achilles

If you notice pain in the Achilles, it's often a result of dropping the heel at the start of the calf raise.

The action of dropping the heel down off the back of the step to ensure a full range of motion often pulls and aggravates the Achilles.

To cure this, perform the calf raise from a flat surface (like the floor) so the Achilles does not have to stretch so much. Slowly build up to working off a raised step as the Achilles becomes less sensitive.

## Bending The Knee

The muscle we are trying to target is the Gastrocnemius. This muscle only does its job when the knee is straight. Keep a straight leg throughout the calf raise.

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Awesome you're well on your way to fixing your knee pain. If you keep performing the exercises in this guide I would expect you to start to see a significant reduction in your knee pain. Will it fix it entirely? Maybe. For many of you it will, if it doesn't we need to look at the hip joint as well. I do just that in my:

[Pain Free Knees in 6 Weeks Program which you can find right here >>](#)

If you've got any questions on this you can find me on social media at @iamsamguest

Here's to a pain free life!

Sam.