

Toe Stretches to Try Right Now

- [Mobility](#)
- [Toe strength](#)
- [Bunions](#)
- [Plantar fasciitis](#)
- [Hammer toe](#)
- [Inside your feet](#)
- [Benefits](#)

Stretching your toes increases blood flow, which can relieve pain and swelling. Keeping your toes relaxed and flexible can also reduce your risk of injury.



Most toe stretches improve flexibility and mobility. Others also increase toe strength. Some are good for specific conditions, such as bunions and plantar fasciitis.

When you do the stretches in this article, you should feel the stretch in your toes or other parts of your foot while taking care not to push or pull too hard or overextend. These stretches work best with [bare feet](#).

The goal for each stretch is to repeat it 10 times, but it's ok to start with 2 or 4 repetitions and increase as tolerated.

Stretches to improve flexibility and mobility

1. Toe lift

You can do this stretch one foot at a time or with both feet together.

1. Sit with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Lift your toes, trying to get them all to the same height.
3. Hold for 5 seconds.
4. Lower your toes.
5. Repeat 10 times on each foot.

2. Toe lift and spread

You can do this stretch one foot at a time or with both feet together. Put a rubber band around your toes to increase resistance and make it more difficult.

1. Sit with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Lift your toes, trying to get them all to the same height.
3. When they're lifted, spread your toes as far apart as possible.
4. Hold for 5 seconds.
5. Relax your toes and lower them back down.
6. Repeat 10 times on each foot.

3. Toe flex

1. Stand next to a hard upright surface like a wall with your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Using your hands to steady yourself, flex the toes of one of your feet as you press them against the wall. Hold for 5 seconds.
3. Move your foot back so it's flat on the floor.
4. Repeat 10 times on each foot.

4. Big toe pull

This stretch increases mobility and flexibility in your big toe. You can also do it using your hands if a towel or belt isn't available.

1. Sit with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Wrap a towel or belt around your big toe.
3. Pull the towel or belt toward you while pushing against it with your foot. Hold for 5 seconds.
4. Repeat 10 times on each foot.

5. Lateral toe stretch

This stretches your toes from side to side instead of up and down. You can do this stretch one foot at a time or with both feet together.

1. Sit with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Point your toes up.
3. Move your toes to the left without moving your foot. Hold for 5 seconds.
4. Relax your toes.
5. Point your toes up.
6. Move your toes to the right without moving your foot. Hold for 5 seconds.
7. Relax your toes.
8. Repeat the stretch with your toes pointed down.
9. Repeat 10 times on each foot.

6. Toe raise, point, and curl

You can do this stretch one foot at a time or with both feet together.

1. Sit with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Lift the front of your foot, leaving your heel on the floor.
3. Raise your toes as high as possible. Hold for 5 seconds.
4. Point your toes down. Hold for 5 seconds.
5. Raise your heel and curl your toes under so your toenails or the tips of your toes are on the floor.
6. Repeat 10 times on each foot.

7. Standing toe stretch

1. Stand with your back against a wall.
2. Cross your left leg over your right leg at your ankle.
3. Point the toes of your left foot and push them against the floor so your toenails are against the floor. Hold for 5 seconds.
4. Relax your toes.
5. Repeat 10 times on each foot.

Stretches that increase strength

8. Toe splay

You can do this stretch one foot at a time or with both feet together. Put a rubber band around your toes to increase resistance and make it more difficult.

1. Sit with your feet flat on the floor.

2. Spread your toes apart as far as possible. Hold for 5 seconds.
3. Relax your toes.
4. Repeat 10 times on each foot.

9. Toe lift and press

This stretch improves your control over toe movements as well as strengthens them.

1. Sit with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Lift your toes on one foot or both feet at the same time, trying to lift them all to the same height.
3. Press only your big toe down and up 10 times.
4. Press only your little toe up and down 10 times.
5. Alternate pressing your big toe up and down 1 time with pressing your little toe up and down 1 time.
6. Repeat alternating big and little toes 10 times on each foot.

10. Doming

This stretch strengthens your toes and lifts (“domes”) the arch of your foot.

1. Sit with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Try to grip the floor with your toes. Make sure you’re using a grabbing motion and not just curling your toes.
3. Hold for 5 seconds.
4. Relax your toes.
5. Repeat 10 times on each foot.

11. Toe curl

This stretch strengthens your toes. Sometimes it's also called a "towel scrunch" for the action of gathering up the towel under your toes. Adding a weight to the towel increases the difficulty.

1. Sit with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Place a small towel on the floor with the short side facing you.
3. Grasp the towel with the toes on one foot and try to pull it toward you.
4. Hold for 5 seconds.
5. Relax your foot.
6. Repeat 10 times with each foot.

12. Marble pick up

1. Sit with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Place two bowls on the floor in front of you, one empty and one holding 10 to 20 marbles.
3. Move each marble to the empty bowl using the toes of one foot.
4. Repeat with the other foot.

13. Walking in the sand

This is good for strengthening your toes, feet, and calves. It can be tiring, so do it for 5 to 10 minutes at first, then increase the time as tolerated.

Walk barefoot in a place covered with sand, such as a beach or sandbox.

Stretches for bunions

A [bunion](#) looks like a bump on the outside of your big toe joint, but ultimately comes from bone misalignment. They can be painful. These stretches can help strengthen mobility in your foot and relieve pain.

14. Big toe stretch

This stretch is good if your toes have been squeezed from wearing tight or pointy shoes.

1. Sit with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Lift your right leg and place your ankle on your left thigh.
3. Using your hands, move your toe up, down, and to each side, holding for 5 seconds in each position.
4. Repeat 10 times.
5. Switch legs and repeat on the big toe of your left foot.

15. Finger toe stretch

This stretch releases pressure on misaligned, painful toes.

1. Sit with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Lift your right leg and place your ankle on your left thigh.
3. Intertwine the fingers of your right hand with your toes.
4. Stretch your toes apart with your fingers as long as you're able.
5. Put your foot back on the floor.
6. Repeat with your left leg.

Stretches for plantar fasciitis

[Plantar fasciitis](#) is inflammation of the ligament that runs underneath your foot from the sole to the heel. It's caused by overuse. It's not really a toe problem but stretches involving your toes can help prevent and relieve it.

16. Toe extension

You should feel this stretch under your foot. Massage the arch of your foot with your thumbs while doing this stretch to increase its effectiveness.

1. Sit with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Lift the leg with the sore foot and place that ankle on the opposite leg.
3. Flex your toes up toward your shin.
4. Hold for 5 seconds.
5. Relax your toes.
6. Repeat 10 times.

17. Bottle roll

While rolling the bottle, focus on painful areas on the bottom of your foot.

1. Sit with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Place a bottle of frozen water on the floor in front of you.
3. Place the sore foot on the bottle.
4. Roll the bottle around with your foot.
5. Continue for 1 to 2 minutes.

18. Ball roll

While rolling the ball, focus on painful areas on the bottom of your foot.

1. Sit with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Place a golf or tennis ball on the floor in front of you.
3. Place the sore foot on the ball.
4. Roll the bottle around with your foot.
5. Continue for 1 to 2 minutes.

Stretches for hammer toe

A hammer toe bends downward at the middle toe joint. It usually affects the second toe and is often due to wearing tight or pointy shoes.

19. Toe pull

This stretches the bent joint, helping the bones move back to their normal position. It should be done gently.

1. Sit with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Lift your right leg and place your ankle on your left thigh.
3. Slowly and gently pull the bent toe down, stretching the joint. Hold for 5 seconds.
4. Repeat 10 times on each affected toe.

The toe curl and marble pick up stretches described previously are also helpful for hammer toe.

Staying on your feet

The bones in your toes are called phalanges. Each of your toes is made up of two or three phalanges. Moving from your toenail toward your foot, they are called distal, middle, and proximal phalanges. Your second through fourth toes have all three. Your big toes only have two: distal and proximal.

Joints are where two bones connect. The joints of your toes also include where your toe bones connect to the next bone in your foot, which are called metatarsals.

Inside the joints, cartilage at the ends of the bones allows them to slide smoothly against each other when they move. Your body creates a lubricant called synovium that helps the bones move more easily.

There aren't any muscles in your toes. Their movement is controlled by tendons and ligaments that connect your toes to muscles in your foot and legs.

ADVERTISING

What are the benefits of toe stretches?

Your toes are small but important parts of your body. They help you walk, run, stand, and support all of your weight when you're on your feet.

Being on your feet all day, being a runner or athlete, and wearing tight shoes can cause your toes to:

- go out of alignment
- cramp
- become painful
- lose flexibility
- be at increased risk for injury

Some conditions are associated with heavy use of your feet and tight shoes. These include:

- bunions
- [hammer toe](#)
- [plantar fasciitis](#)

With or without these problems and conditions, stretching your toes can be beneficial. Stretching can help your toes become:

- realigned
- relaxed
- less painful
- more flexible
- less tired
-

Stretching won't get rid of bunions, hammer toe, or plantar fasciitis but it may help symptoms and bring you relief.