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## CLAFitness Foot & Ankle Appreciation Routine

Running is a single leg sport and thus the muscles in the feet and lower leg have to do a lot of work with each foot strike and push off. Many assume that because those muscles work every day when walking and running that they are getting stronger but, running and walking alone will not make strong feet and ankles. Strong feet and muscles in the lower leg lead to better foot function. This in turn leads to better stability in your gait and better energy transfer from landing to push off. This series works the muscles of your feet and lower legs in all different planes of motion causing them to constantly engage and thus adapt and build strength and muscular endurance. This routine is good for runners, hikers, triathletes and anyone with a history of ankle sprains.

### **Gear Needed: Band, Wobble Board (or foam/pillow)**

**Do each exercise once as directed. If you have time, repeat the series.**

<b>Exercise</b>	<b>Repetitions</b>
Ankle Inversion with Band	1 x 10 each side
Ankle Eversion with Band	1 x 10 each side
Ankle Dorsiflexion with Band	1 x 10 each side
Ankle Plantarflexion with Band	1 x 10 each side
Toe Walk - Heel Walk	30 seconds for each
Wobble Board Control	30 seconds each way
Eccentric Calf Raises Straight Leg	1 x 10 each side
Eccentric Calf Raises Bend Leg	1 x 10 each side

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## Ankle Inversion with Band

**Equipment:** Band attached to something secure at ground level

Sit on floor with leg straight. Attach looped band to your forefoot (this can be done either barefoot or with shoes as shown). Keeping leg still, move the foot inward against the resistance of the band. Slowly return to the starting position.

This exercise can be done first with the foot flexed and then with foot pointed as shown.

Keep the leg still by having one hand on your knee.

This exercise works invertor muscles that help stabilize the ankle.



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Ankle Inversion with Band

## Ankle Eversion with Band

**Equipment:** Band attached to something secure at ground level

Sit on floor with leg straight. Attach looped band to your forefoot (this can be done either barefoot or with shoes as shown). Keeping leg still, move the foot outward against the resistance of the band. Slowly return to the starting position.

This exercise can be done first with the foot flexed and then with foot pointed as shown.

Keep the leg still by having one hand on your knee.

This exercise works the evertor muscles that help stabilize the ankle and foot.



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Ankle Eversion with Band

## Ankle Dorsiflexion with Band

### Equipment: Exercise Band

Attach an exercise band to something sturdy and loop it around the upper part of your foot. You can be barefoot or with shoes as shown.

Sit with your legs out straight in front of you. Keep your leg straight with your heel supported. Keep your leg and heel still and slowly bring the upper part of your foot towards your body. Hold and then return to the starting position.

Switch sides.

This exercise works the front muscles of your lower leg.



Ankle Dorsiflexion with Band



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## Ankle Plantarflexion with Band

### Equipment: Band

Attach looped band to your forefoot (this can be done either barefoot or with shoes as shown) and provide resistance by keeping the band taut. Sit with your legs out straight in front of you. Keep your leg straight with your heel supported

Keep your leg and heel still and slowly point your toes away from your body. Hold and then return to the starting position.

Switch sides.

This exercise works the many muscles that plantarflex the foot.



Ankle Plantarflexion with Band



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## Toe Walk – Heel Walk

**Equipment: None**

This can be done barefoot or with shoes as shown.

First walk on tip toes without letting your heels touch the ground. Next walk with your toes off the ground only on your heels. Continue as directed.

This exercise works on balance and the stabilizing muscles of the feet, ankles and lower legs.



Toe Walk – Heel Walk



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## Standing Calf Stretch

**Equipment: Sturdy object to hold onto or Incline Board**

Stand facing a wall or other sturdy object. Bring your left foot forward. Keep toes on both feet pointing towards the wall. Lean towards the wall keeping the heel of your right foot on the ground and bending only from the ankle. Feel a gentle stretch in the back of your lower leg. Hold.

Next, keeping the same positioning slightly bend your right knee. This emphasizes a stretch in a deeper calf muscle. Hold. Switch legs.

Remember to only go as far as you can while keeping your heel on the ground.

This can also be done on an incline board as shown – again do this both with a straight leg and with a bent leg.

This stretches your calves.



Stretch Standing Calf Stretch



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# Wobble Board Control

**Equipment:** Wobble Board or piece of foam or a pillow.

Stand with one foot on the wobble board. If you do not have a wobble board, you can use a piece of foam or even a pillow or couch cushion. Use a wall to steady your balance if needed. Engage your core.

Balance on one foot and with control slowly rock the wobble board front and back and then side to side. The goal is to not let the edge of the wobble board touch the ground. If using a foam pad, rock your foot forward and back, side to side to create instability. Feel your stabilizing muscles of the foot, ankle and lower leg control the movement.

This challenges the stabilizing muscles of the lower leg.



Wobble Board Control



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# Eccentric Calf Raises Straight Leg

**Equipment:** Step

Use a sturdy step and stand with your forefeet on the step and heels unsupported. Keep your legs straight. Engage your core and hold on for balance, if needed. Use **BOTH** feet to raise your body so you are standing on your toes. Lift your left leg up and slowly lower your right heel so it drops below the step. Repeat as directed. Switch sides.

Lower below the step only as is comfortable for you. If you have no sturdy step available, this can just be done on the ground.

This strengthens and stretches your calves.



Calf Raises – Eccentric Calf Raises Straight Leg



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## Calf Raises – Eccentric Calf Raises Bent Leg

### Equipment: Step

Use a sturdy step and stand with your forefeet on the step and heels unsupported. Bend at the knees. Engage your core and hold on for balance, if needed. Use **BOTH** feet to raise your body so you are standing on your toes. Lift your left leg up and slowly lower your right heel so it drops below the step. Repeat as directed. Switch sides.

Keep your knees bent throughout the exercises. Lower below the step only as is comfortable for you. If you have no sturdy step available, this can just be done on the ground.

This strengthens and stretches your deeper calf muscles.



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Calf Raises – Eccentric Calf Raises Bent Leg