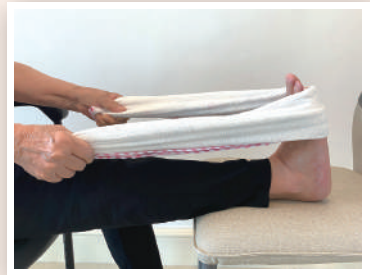


# Ankle and Foot

## Physiotherapy Exercise



Ankles and feet are the weight-bearing body parts. Ageing and other factors like excess strain or injury may lead to discomfort in the ankles and feet of the elderly, and can cause them to fall.

In view of this, physiotherapists from the Elderly Health Service of Department of Health have designed the following exercises as a reference for practice by the elderly.



Department of Health



Elderly Health Service

## Function

Appropriate exercises can increase the range of movement, muscle strength and flexibility of ankles and feet. They also improve the walking ability and agility and hence help to prevent sprain, alleviate foot discomfort and reduce fall risk.

## Foot Exercise Precautions

1. Have adequate space and use sturdy furniture or handrail for support during exercise
2. Wear well-fitted and comfortable clothes, shoes and socks (except for those exercises that need to be done by bare feet)
3. Prepare a sturdy chair with backrest and a long towel
4. The elderly should perform the exercises according to their ability and progress gradually. As a general rule, these exercises should not cause any discomfort
5. The elderly with the following conditions should consult a physiotherapist or other healthcare professionals before starting the exercises:
  - Joint deformity of foot
  - Artificial hip joint
  - Unhealed wounds in lower limbs
  - Unhealed fracture, sprain, dislocation or other discomfort of lower limbs
6. Stop immediately if you feel any discomfort while exercising. If the discomfort is severe, persists or worsens, please seek urgent medical advice

# Joint Mobility Exercises

(Suggest to perform 1-3 sets daily,  
10 repetitions per set)

## Exercise 1

Position: Sit with your heels on the ground. Lift the forefeet off the floor.

Instructions: Bend down your toes, then lift up and spread out.



## Exercise 2

Position: Either lie on bed or sit

Instructions:

Rotate your right ankle clockwise and anticlockwise, 10 times for each direction. Then, repeat with your left foot.



# Stretching Exercise

(Suggest to perform once a day,  
2-4 repetitions each time for both feet)

## Exercise 3

**Position:** Sit with right ankle supported on left thigh (similar to cross legs sitting with ankle on knee)

**Instructions:** Hold the heel and toes separately with two hands. Stretch your toes upwards until you feel a slight stretch over plantar fascia of right foot (the sole). Hold for 10-30 seconds, then put right leg down. Repeat with your left foot

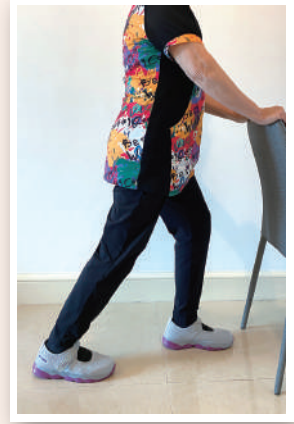


## Exercise 4

**Position:** Stand while holding onto a sturdy handrail or furniture with both hands

**Instructions:**

Take one step forward with your left leg and extend your right leg backwards, keeping your back straight. Bend your left knee until you feel a light stretch along your right calf. Hold for 10-30 seconds. Repeat with your left leg.



OR

**Position:** Sit with right leg straight and support it on another sturdy chair

**Instructions:**

Hold one end of the towel in each hand and loop it under the right forefoot. Straighten your knee and pull the towel with both hands towards you until you feel a light stretch along your right calf. Hold for about 10-30 seconds. Put right leg down and repeat with your left leg.



# Strengthening Exercise

(Suggest to perform 2-3 days a week (on alternate days), 10 repetitions a set, 1-3 sets a day)

## Exercise 5

**Position:** Stand while holding onto a sturdy furniture or handrail with both hands.

**Instructions:** Raise your heels so that you are standing on toes, hold for 5 seconds, then relax and lower your heels. Raise your forefeet off the floor so that you are standing on heels, hold for 5 seconds, then relax and lower your forefeet.



OR

Position: Sit with your feet flat on the floor.

Instructions:

Raise your heels, hold for 5 seconds, then relax and lower your heels. Raise your forefeet off the floor, hold for 5 seconds, then relax and lower your forefeet.

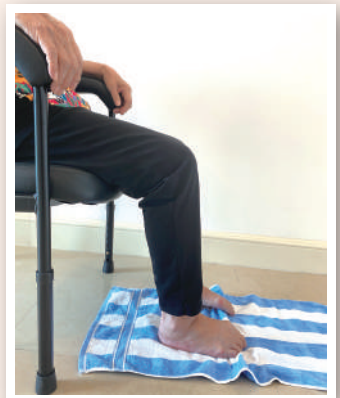


## Exercise 6

Position: Sit with your feet flat on a towel placing on the floor.

Instructions:

Bend your toes to crinkle up the towel, hold for 5 seconds. Then straighten your toes to push the towel forward.



## Caring Tips for Foot

The elderly should protect their feet and reduce loads of feet by:

- Selecting appropriate footwear (for example toe box should be round and wide, material should be sturdy to provide adequate support for foot while having appropriate softness, outsole should be shock absorbable and with slip-resistant treads)



- Using suitable insole according to advice from physiotherapist or other healthcare professionals, for providing adequate support and reducing pressure on the feet. This will help to relieve foot discomfort and improve gait
- Avoiding prolonged standing and walking
- Using trolley or seeking help for prolonged manual handling or with heavy load

Please consult a physiotherapist or other healthcare professionals if you have any queries about this pamphlet.

Elderly Health Service, Department of Health  
Website: [www.elderly.gov.hk](http://www.elderly.gov.hk)  
Elderly Health Infoline: 2121 8080

