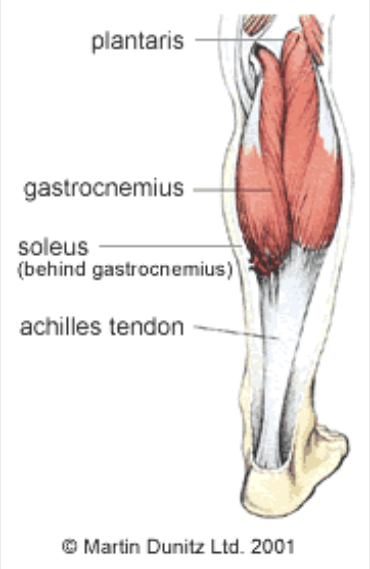
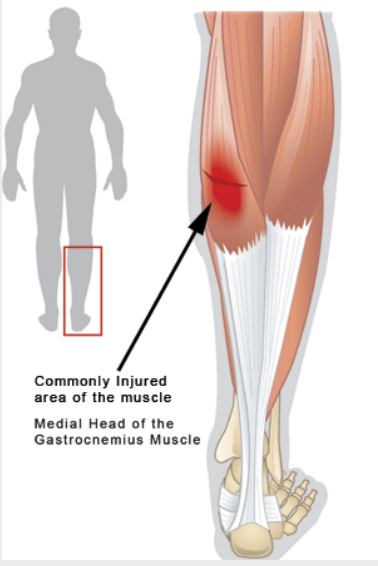
PHYSIO

Calf strains





The calf muscle consists of 3 muscles:

- Gastrocnemius
- Soleus
- Plantaris

These muscles function to pull up on the heel bone during the 'push-off' phase in walking and running.

A muscle strain is most commonly known as a 'pulled muscle'.

This implies that the muscle was forced beyond it's limits and a few of the muscle fibres were torn as a result.

Calf muscle strains most commonly occur on the inside of the calf.

There are three different grades of severity:

A 1st degree strain involves damage to a few of the muscle fibres.

- The signs are usually present after the activity and are felt as a cramp or tightness with slight pain on stretch or contraction of the calf muscles.

A 2nd degree strain involves extensive damage to muscle fibres.

- Immediate pain is felt and the calf is sore to the touch.
- It is confirmed by pain with stretch and contraction of the calf muscle.

A 3rd degree strain is a complete rupture of a muscle.

- There is an immediate burning or stabbing pain and the person will not be able to walk on the injured leg.
- There is a visible lump and bruising in the calf.









How to treat a calf strain

1. Rest is very important as a grade 1 and 2 strain can easily progress into a grade 3 strain.

- Grade 1 - rest up to 3 weeks
- Grade 2 - 4 to 6 weeks

2. Ice should be applied but not directly to the skin. Apply for 20 minutes every 2 hours.

3. Kinesio strapping or compression bandages to alleviate any swelling.

4. Elevate the leg to reduce swelling.

5. Crutches are advisable in very painful cases where weight bearing is not tolerable.

6. Physiotherapy techniques such as: massage to break down the scar tissue, dry needling to relieve any trigger points and electrotherapy for pain and inflammation.

6. After the initial rest period, rehabilitation of the calf muscle must commence. This will align the scar tissue along the normal lines of stress to improve the tensile strength of the calf muscle.

- Gentle calf stretches.
- Isometric strengthening progressing to concentric resistance training with a theraband.
- Eccentric training.
- Core strength exercises to prevent re-injury of the calf.

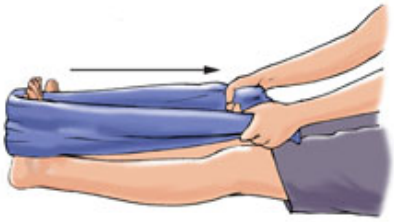
When can you return to your activity or sport:

After a grade 1 strain, gentle jogging can commence after 7 to 9 days after injury and sprinting after 3 weeks.

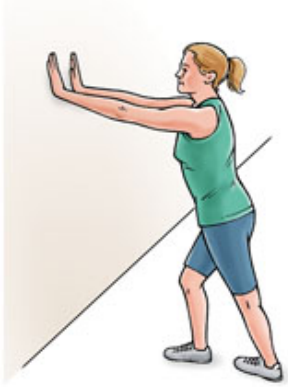
Grade 2 strains fully recover by 4 to 8 weeks.

Grade 3 strains normally require surgery and rehabilitation will take 3 months before any return to sport can commence.

Calf Strain Rehabilitation Exercises



Towel stretch



Standing calf stretch



Resisted ankle plantar flexion



Heel raise



Single leg balance



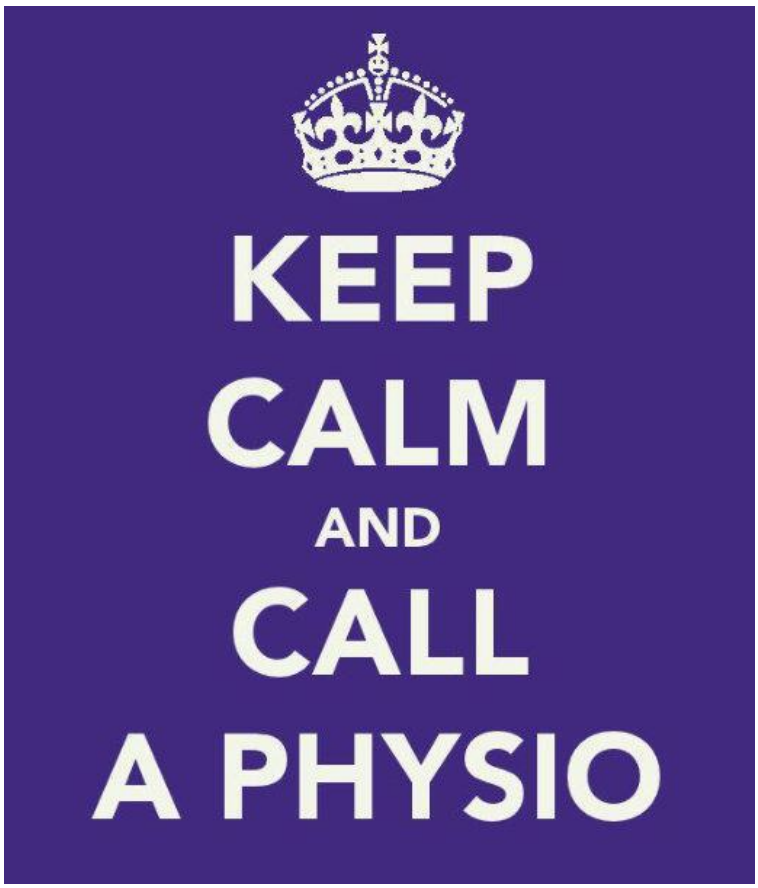
Nose touch



Wall jump

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If you have any questions or concerns regarding a calf injury or any muscle strain please do not hesitate to contact me!



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