

Plaster cast stretch (following Botulinum Toxin A injection)

This information shows an overview of calf muscle stretch exercises that can be done after the plaster cast has been removed. It also gives advice on caring for the plaster cast.

Introduction

Children and young people with neurological conditions (e.g. cerebral palsy) can have spasticity in their calf muscle, which is connected to the heel via the Achilles tendon (Fig 1). This tightness in the calf muscle will lead to difficulties placing the heel on the ground when walking and standing. The child will then walk on their tiptoes.

Plaster casts

Plaster casts (Fig: 2) are frequently used in conjunction with Botulinum Toxin A injections but may be used alone. The plaster cast helps to correct a mild deformity of the foot due to very tight muscles. The calf muscle will be stretched to the point of tightness by the nursing staff. A plaster cast will be applied and the foot will be kept in this position which will then lead to a continuous stretch of the calf muscle. The plaster cast will usually be readjusted after 2 weeks. In total the plaster cast will be applied for 2-4 weeks. Once the plaster cast has been removed, your child / you might experience difficulties with walking before getting used to the new foot position.

Please make sure you protect the plaster cast from water (all information and advice on this will be provided by Plaster Room). You will not be able to immerse the plaster cast in water. If your child / you experience pain while in the plaster cast please contact the Plaster Room or your hospital doctor. If you have any queries or would like to talk to / meet Plaster Room staff prior to casting please telephone Plaster Room to make arrangements.

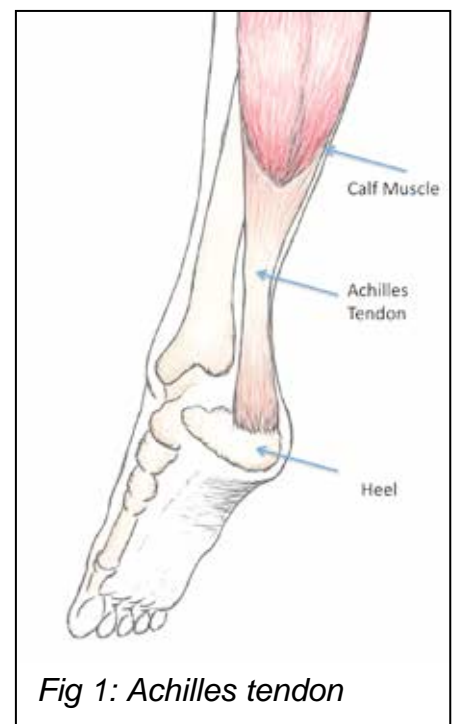


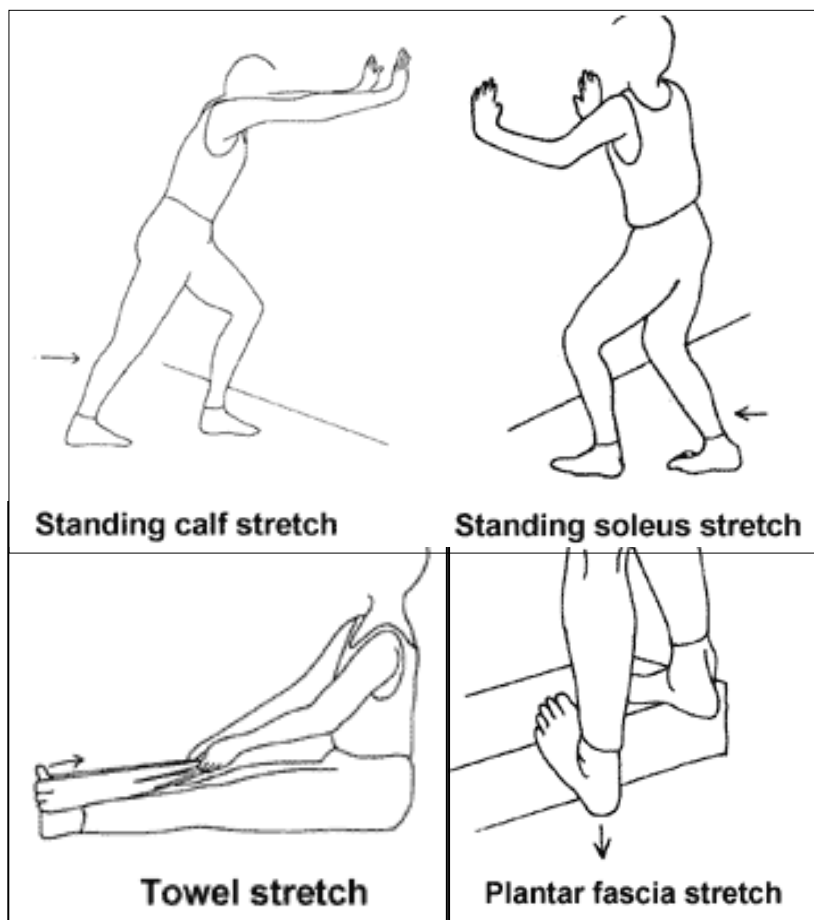
Fig 1: Achilles tendon



Fig 2: Plaster casts

Calf muscle stretching exercises:

Below is a reminder of some of the exercises (Fig 3) that your physiotherapist may have set for you/your child. These exercises are useful to stretch tight calf muscles. Please contact your physiotherapist if you have any questions or are unsure which exercises you/your child should be doing.



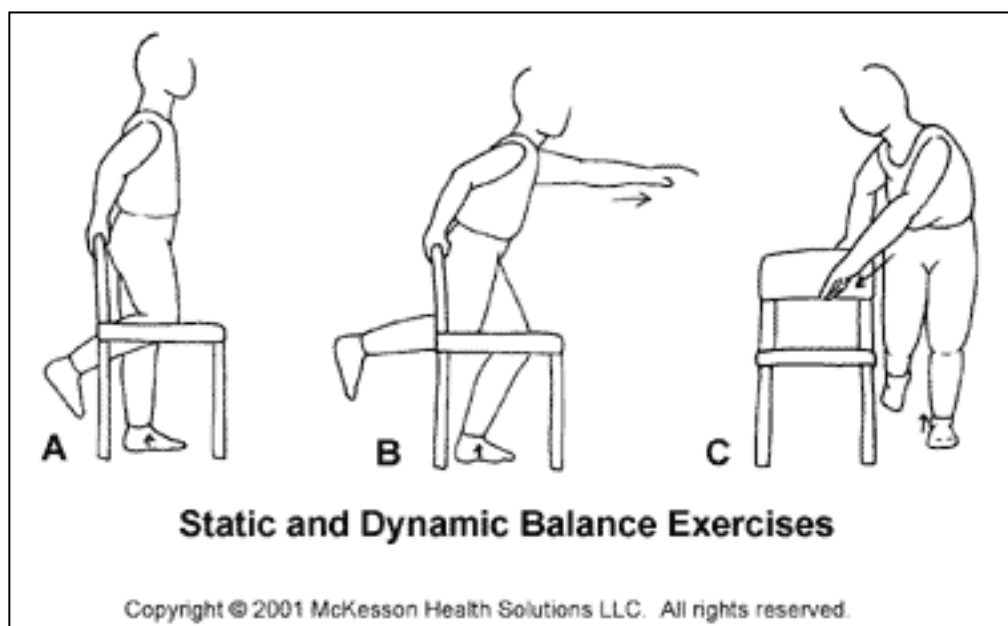


Fig 3: Calf muscle stretching exercises

Orthotics

If your child uses splints from the Orthotics Department it is important that they have comfortable, well fitting splints to use when they stop using the plaster casts.

If this is not the case, please make contact with the Orthotics Department prior to undertaking a plaster stretch to arrange casting with the orthotist. Please ensure that you contact the department at least 4 weeks before casting.

If your child is having a 4 week stretch with a change at 2 weeks, please request that the casting takes place after 2 weeks of stretch.

Contact details:

Dingley reception: 0118 322 5213
Paediatric Secretary: 0118 322 7531 Option 1
Plaster Room: 0118 322 7040
Orthotics Department: 0118 322 7552

Visit our website: www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

Dingley Specialist Children's Centre, January 2015
RBFT Paediatric Department
Reviewed: May 2019. Review due: May 2021