

# Higher Level Ankle Strengthening

---

1. **Runners Poses:** Stand relaxed with erect body posture, with your feet under your shoulders. Swing your right thigh forward until it is parallel with the floor (your knee will bend as you do this); as you swing your thigh forward, also bring your left arm forward, (as you would do during a normal running stride). Hold this position (with good stability and balance) for a couple of seconds, while maintaining relaxed stability and balance, and then bring your right foot back to the ground and your left arm back to a relaxed position at your side (that completes one 'pose'). Perform 14 more pose reps with your right thigh, and then switch over to the left leg for 15 poses. The progression with this exercise is to gradually speed up the thigh-lift movement - and also to elevate the thigh beyond the parallel-with-the-ground position (so that the exercise eventually becomes a high-knee-lift pose). To make this more challenging sand on the balls of your feet. 15 poses each leg.
2. **Hopping on Stairs:** On a flight of about 10 steps, first hop up the entire staircase on your right foot only. Walk back down, and repeat with your left foot. Then, repeat this right-left sequence twice more.
3. **Wall Shin Raises:** Stand with your back against the wall, with your heels about a foot away from the wall. Dorsiflex both ankles simultaneously, while your heels remain in contact with the ground. Bring your toes as far toward your shins as you can, and then lower your feet back toward the ground, but do not allow your feet to touch the ground before beginning the next repeat. Simply lower them until they are close to the ground, and then begin another repetition. Once you have finished a set of reps, maintain your basic position with your back against the wall, dorsiflex your ankles to close to their fullest extent, and then quickly dorsiflex and plantar flex your ankles 30 times over a very small range of motion (smaller than the nearly full range you use for the basic reps; the emphasis here is on quickness). These short, quick ankle movements are called 'pulses'. 2 sets of 50 reps, plus 2 sets of 30 'pulses'.
4. **One-Footed Heel Raises:** Stand straight up with a relaxed posture and with all your body weight supported on your right foot (your left leg should be flexed at the knee so that your left shin is roughly parallel with the ground). Contract your right calf muscles as strongly as possible, so that your right heel rises vertically and you rock forward onto your right toes. Let your right heel return to the ground at moderate speed, and you have completed one rep. Move rhythmically and smoothly without hesitation, and try to maintain good balance, posture, and stability at all times (initially, you may touch a wall, fence, or other structure for support if you are having trouble with your balance). After completing one set on your right foot, perform a set

with your left, and then move back to your right until you have carried out three sets on each foot. 3 sets of 15 reps on each foot.

5. **Toe Walking with Opposite - Ankle Dorsiflexion:** Stand as tall as you can on your toes. Balance for a moment and then begin walking forward with slow, small steps (take one step every one to two seconds, with each step being about 10 to 12 inches in length). As you do this, maintain a tall, balanced posture. Be sure to dorsiflex the ankle and toes of the moving leg upward as high as you can with each step (move the top of your foot as close to the shin as possible), while maintaining your balance on the toes and ball of the support foot. 2 sets of 20 yards, with a short break between sets.
  
6. **High-Bench Step-Ups:** Start from a standing position on top of a knee-high bench, with your body weight on your left foot and your weight shifted toward the left heel. The right foot should be free and held slightly behind the body. Lower your body in a controlled movement until the toes of your right foot touch the ground, while maintaining all of your weight on the left foot. Return to the starting position by driving downward with your left heel and straightening your left leg. Repeat for the prescribed number of reps, and then switch over to the right leg. Maintain absolutely upright posture with your trunk throughout this entire movement, with your hands held at your sides. 2 sets of 15 reps on each leg, with a short break between sets.
  
7. **Partial Squats:** Stand with your left foot directly under your left shoulder, keeping your left knee just slightly flexed and maintaining a relaxed erect posture. Hold a barbell so that it rests on the top-back of your shoulders just behind your neck; you may incline your upper body just slightly forward for balance. Most of your body weight should be directed through the heel of your left foot. Your right leg should be flexed at the knee so that the foot is not touching the ground. For the partial squat you should just go down about half-way - so that the angle between the back of your thigh and lower leg is just 135 degrees or so. Return to the starting position while maintaining an upright posture with your trunk. Complete 10 reps (10 partial squats). Then - without resting - descend into the 11th partial squat, but instead of rising back up hold the partial-squat position (the 135-degree position) for 10 full seconds. We'll call your body alignment during this 10-second period the 'static-hold' position. After completing 10 seconds in the static-hold position, immediately - without resting - rattle off 10 more reps, maintain the static hold for 10 seconds again, hit 10 more reps, and then hold statically for 10 more seconds.  
Each set proceeds as follows (with no recovery at all within the set):
  - (A) 10 partial squats
  - (B) 10 seconds of holding your leg and body in the down position
  - (C) 10 partial squats
  - (D) 10 seconds of holding
  - (E) 10 partial squats
  - (F) 10 seconds of holding

8. **Bound 2 x 100 yards:** Use longer strides than usual and take a 20-second break between reps.