

Hallux Rigidus Exercises Handout

Hallux rigidus is a progressive form of arthritis in the first joint of your big toe. The space between the bones in your big toe narrows as the cartilage that covers these bones begins to wear down or is damaged, causing pain and discomfort. Signs to take note of include swelling around the joint, a stiff big toe, or pain in the toe when walking.

As the condition worsens, your range of motion in the affected toe becomes more limited, stiffness becomes more severe, and pain may persist even at rest. This can severely limit daily activities and may cause issues with your knee, hip, or back due to changes in your walking pattern.

Hallux rigidus treatment exercises

The following exercises are recommended to help ease the symptoms of Hallux Rigidus. They aim to improve the big toe's mobility, strength, and overall function.

1. Toe pulls

These will help stretch your big toe and increase your mobility so you can hold a typical walking pattern.

Steps:

1. Lift your sore foot onto a chair and hold it still where the toes meet your foot.
2. Using your other hand, gently pull your big toe forward and flex it down. You should feel a gentle stretch.
3. Hold for 10-20 seconds.

2. Extension stretches

This will help with stiffness in the big toe, aiming to stretch your big toe at 90 degrees toward your ankle.

Steps:

1. Sit on a chair and lift your sore foot onto your other knee.
2. Hold your heel in one hand, and use your other hand to pull the big toe back toward the ankle. You should feel a gentle stretch along the bottom of your foot.
3. Hold this stretch for 15-30 seconds.

3. Towel curl

These exercises will help build strength in your big toe, but they should be avoided if you have very little mobility in it.

Steps:

1. Sit comfortably on a chair. Place a small hand towel on the ground and place your sore foot on it.
2. Scrunch the towel by curling your toes and then flatten it again by spreading them out.
3. When you can comfortably do this, try the exercise while standing.

4. Toe press, point, and curl

This exercise works your entire foot, providing mobility and strength benefits while reducing pain and improving daily movement.

Steps:

1. Sit in a straight-back chair and place your feet on the floor.
2. Press your toes into the ground, raising your heel.
3. Point your toes while your heel is still raised.
4. Curl your toes under while your heel is still raised.
5. Hold each position for five seconds and repeat the sequence.

5. Toe salutes

This exercise stretches your toe and builds strength. Focus on controlling your other toes, which should stay on the ground.

Steps:

1. Sit in a chair with your legs at 90 degrees.
 2. Raise your big toe off the ground and hold for 5 seconds while keeping all your other toes on the floor.
 3. Now, lift your other four toes off the ground, keep your big toe on the ground, and hold for 5 seconds.
 4. Repeat the exercise with your other foot.
-

Reference

Yeargain Foot and Ankle. (2022, April 28). *5 simple hallux rigidus exercises* | *hallux rigidus*. Yeargain Foot and Ankle. <https://dryeargain.com/hallux-rigidus-exercises/>