

Exercises for stiff ankles using the TheraBand

Research has shown that your muscles in your lower leg contract when you walk. This pumps blood out and back up your legs – using your TheraBand will encourage your ankle to “loosen up” and become more flexible

Set your mobility targets at a sensible rate – make them relevant to you! Do you walk to the shops? How many days do you walk? Can you comfortably walk a little faster?

Before starting remember – **these exercises are achievable!** They have been completed by other people with open leg ulcers, who’ve reported improvement in movement and reduced pain.

Ask the health professional giving you this sheet to work through the exercises with you to begin with – this will help your confidence that you are doing them correctly.

Doing the exercises:

POSITION – Are you sitting comfortably? It is really important that you feel comfortable and safe. You can do these exercises sitting on your armchair or a kitchen chair with your foot resting on the ground at an angle of roughly 40-45 degrees – you can even do them with your leg up on your bed or sofa.

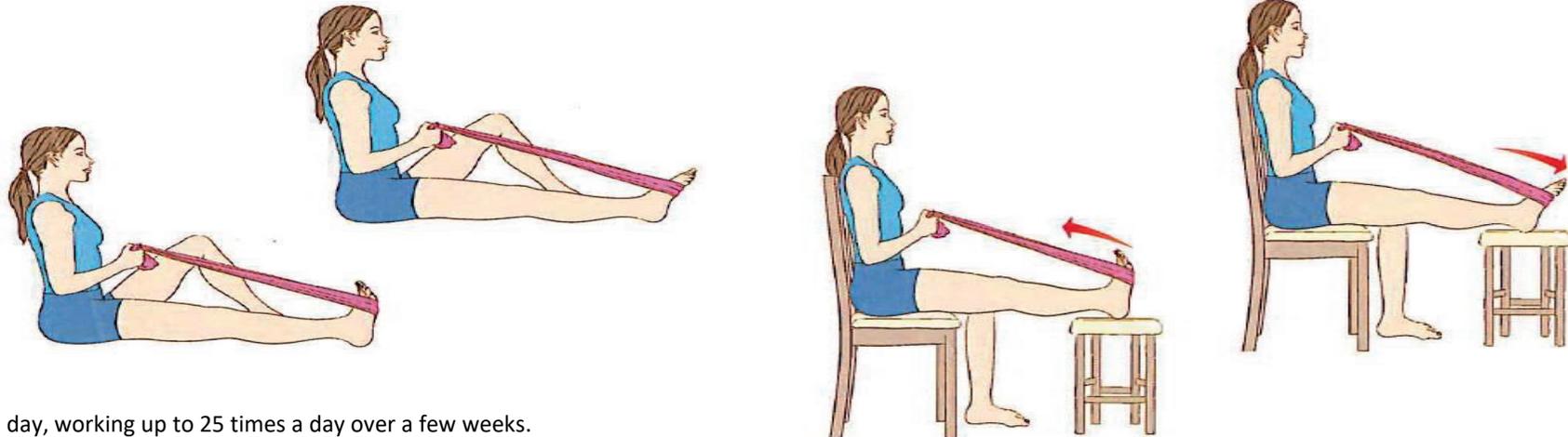
REMEMBER – your calf and heel should NEVER leave the surface they are resting on.

Once you are comfortable place your TheraBand around the ball of your foot (if you are struggling ask your health professional to help show you how to). Holding both ends firmly so the TheraBand does not slide down, point your toe into the TheraBand slowly (you should feel your calf muscles working). Point your toe as far as you can and hold while you count to eight (see below).

Next, bring your toe back towards you so that it is pointing towards the ceiling (your foot and calf should now feel relaxed).

Alternate this with the next exercise. Relax your foot with your toe pointing towards the ceiling, pull the TheraBand until your foot moves towards your face (remember to keep your heel on the supporting surface – see below).

(You should feel your calf stretching, it may take a while to see much movement – if your ankle is stiff it may take time to loosen up a little, don’t be discouraged if it takes a while).



TIPS

Try to repeat 10 times a day, working up to 25 times a day over a few weeks.

If you develop back, hip or knee pain – **STOP!** Ask your health professional to check your technique.

- Stiff ankles will need a stronger TheraBand. You will need either a gold or silver coloured TheraBand.
- Handles can also be purchased online but a knot at either end may work just as well.
- You can do these exercises with your bandages on.
- If possible, have your ankle range measured before starting this programme and again at 6 weeks – you may well be impressed by your improvement.