



Assisted Resisted Calf Stretches

an online resource
created to accompany

Pre- and Perinatal Massage Therapy:

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and Postpartum Practice*
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this resource links to:

Chapter 4, page 112





Assisted Resisted Calf Stretches

(See photo at end of document)

Intention

To both prevent and alleviate cramps in the gastrocnemius, soleus, and peroneals.

Procedures

May be performed in any position.

Gastrocnemius/soleus

1. Hold the client's foot in dorsiflexion (toes toward patella) and have her gently attempt to plantar flex her foot (point her toes) while you resist this action for five seconds.
2. Ask her to stop her effort and immediately increase your dorsiflexion to stretch the posterior calf as far as it goes without force.
3. Repeat this resisted effort twice, increasing the dorsiflexion slightly with each repetition.
4. Perform these movements with her knee flexed and then again three times with her knee extended to stretch both the gastrocnemius and the soleus muscles.
5. Repeat on the other foot.



Peroneals

1. Hold the client's foot in inversion (lateral edge toward her sole) and have her gently attempt to evert (lift the lateral edge toward her knee) while you resist this action for five seconds.
2. Ask her to stop her effort and immediately increase your inversion to stretch the lateral calf muscles as far as they go without force.
3. Repeat this resisted effort twice, increasing inversion slightly with each repetition.

Hints

- Teach her to perform these stretches daily if she gets frequent cramps. Her partner can learn to provide the resistance; alternatively, she can create the resistance by holding the ends of a folded towel stretched under the ball of her foot. Remind her about doing these both with knee flexed and knee extended.
- Doing these just before bedtime often reduces the frequency and severity of calf cramps.
- For the peroneals, instruct her to cross one calf over her thigh so that she may hold her lateral foot in the position above.
- Peroneal resisted stretches are often most useful for those clients who have collapsed medial arches and/or more pronounced lateral rotation at the hip joints.
- Prevent overstretching ligaments by staying in normal joint ROM.

