



GJP
Elite

Achilles Action Plan

**Your FREE Guide to Healthy Calves
and Pain-Free Movement**

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Welcome!

Now we both know why you're here—***You want to put an end to your calf and achilles troubles for good.***

Fortunately, I can help you with that.

Throughout my 15 years in the industry, I've had plenty of experience coaching athletes and everyday people (myself included!) through this common problem. **So let's dive straight in.**



Let's start by breaking down the calf into 2 muscles, the **gastrocnemius** (big and wide) and the **soleus** (long and thin), and the tendon that feeds into the heel - the **achilles**.

How we look after these muscles, as well as the health of the achilles tendon, will drastically determine the way you move, your propensity to *want* to exercise, and your exposure to exercise related injuries. Let's run through it!



Tendon Health Matters

Tendons need more than just to attach muscle to bone. They need quality loading patterns to stay thick, durable, and **capable of withstanding up to 6x your body weight** during activities like sprinting or jumping.

Game-changing tendon strategies include:

- Eccentric Training – Slow, controlled lowering actions
- Isometric Holds – Static holds in difficult positions to build tendon stiffness
- Progressive loading over time to gradually adapt the tendon and reduce flare-ups





Your Achilles Matters More Than You Think

Most people experiencing achilles pain are missing crucial pieces of the puzzle. **Perhaps you stretch religiously but still hurt?** Maybe you just avoid activities that cause pain and never actually fix the problem?

Sure, you dodge a bullet short-term. But the long-term solution still won't reveal itself.

So first let's Identify the Problem

then we're going to do 3 things...

1: Rebuild Your Foundations

2: Develop Unbreakable Strength

**3: Add The Cherry On Top
(read on to find out what it is!)**



Identifying the Problem

The Reality Check

Many people don't realise that every time we jump and land, or run, change direction etc. we are putting about **6x body weight through our joints** - for seriously explosive movements, this can be up to **10x bodyweight!** That's a massive amount force.

If your tendons aren't conditioned to tolerate this force, something's going to give.

Why Stretching Alone Doesn't Work

So you're doing loads of stretching but still have pain? **That's because the missing piece is actually nothing to do with muscle flexibility.** Your achilles tendons need to be thick and robust, with strong, healthy muscles attached to them, to handle the forces you're asking for.

We Achieve That With A Three Step Approach

- **Step 1 - Foundations:** Mobility and muscle health
- **Step 2 - Strength:** Progressive loading and conditioning
- **Step 3 - Cherry On Top:** Plyometrics and return to sport



Step 1 - Foundation Building

Daily Mobility & Muscle Health Essentials

The number one thing to start with is mobility. No more skipping or rushing your warm-ups - every successful injury reduction plan starts with joint preparation and full-range activation.

Key mobility moves might include:

- **Foam Rolling** – Not a ‘must’ every day, but 2–3x per week will help with ongoing maintenance
- **Ankle Wall Drill** – designed to lengthen the achilles and build a fluid range of motion
- **Inchworms** – Dynamic movement that warms up the full posterior chain

💡 **Remember: There’s no such thing as ‘injury prevention’ - all we can do is reduce the likelihood to give you the best possible chance (which is why you’ll hear me refer to it as ‘injury reduction’). The goal is to lower your risk and improve ability to withstand, not chase perfection.**

Ankle Mobility: Foam Rolling



Foam rolling alone won't fix anything, but combined with a holistic programme for ankle health it will help keep your calves feeling loose and healthy, reduce stiffness and keep the risk of strains and ruptures to a minimum. Spend 2-3 minutes on each calf 2-3 times per week.



Ankle Mobility Drill: Wall Drive



I recommend doing wall drives at least 3 times per week if you're trying to get your ankle mobility improving. 10 repetitions driving the front knee to the wall. You can even do multi-directional (5 down the middle, 5 towards big toe, 5 towards little toe)

Ankle Mobility Drill: Inchworm



Inchworms are a great way to practice lengthening through the posterior chain (back of the body).

2 sets of 3-5 reps with a few seconds hold at the end of each rep will get the calves and achilles cooking!



It's not a knowledge problem...

It's execution.

Sometimes, it's just not enough to know what to do. You need to be shown, guided. You may just need your hand held - and want the guarantee of success.



Want to go deeper and get coached by me to achieve your dream outcome? I help athletes and everyday performers stay strong, mobile, and pain-free in my flagship programme...

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Step 2: Develop Unbreakable Strength

Important: Before We Dive Into ‘Strength Training’

As you’ll see, the key exercises I’ll focus on with you here are ankle specific - we’ll address what you need to do to develop the durability in that joint to function pain free in your sport and lifestyle.

HOWEVER.

It would be negligent of me not to emphasise that ankle-based exercises like calf raises alone are simply not enough in the grand scheme of things.

I’m going to encourage that **in addition to everything in this plan, you are regularly focusing on compound lower body strength** exercises and big muscle groups:

Squat variations

Deadlifts

Hip Thrusts

Lunge variations

These will address the holistic health of your lower body, while you take-on the ankle specific tasks.



Unpopular Fact: Strength Training Is Not Optional (people just behave like it is)

Too many people with achilles pain rely on stretching alone. But if your tendons are flimsy, they will keep flaring up. **Load tolerance is non-negotiable.**

How to build strength in your calves and achilles:

- Single Leg Calf Raises (on a step for full range)
- Low reps (3–8) with heavy resistance to build real strength
- Add weight (like a kettlebell) if bodyweight becomes too easy

Training strength = fewer reps, higher weight. As you increase reps past 9–12, you move into hypertrophy (muscle size) and endurance (15+ reps).

For avoidance of doubt, I'll repeat: There is no world where you overcome your calf/achilles pain without strength training.

Just making sure that one sunk in.



Step 2: Develop Unbreakable Strength

Understanding Rep Ranges

- **Strength (1-8 reps):** Heavy load, develops max force production
- **Hypertrophy (9-15 reps):** Moderate loads - muscle size/lean mass
- **Endurance (15+ reps):** Light load, builds muscular endurance

Single Leg Calf Raises: Your Foundation Exercise

For Endurance:

- 2-3 sets of 12-15 reps each leg
- 30-60 second recoveries
- Final set: as many reps as possible

For Maximum Strength:

- 3-4 sets of 5 reps each leg
- 90-120 second recoveries
- Add weight with a barbell, dumbbell, or use a leg press machine
- Final set: as many reps as possible

Key Points:

- Keep your knee completely straight
- Push heel as high as possible
- Drop heel below level (use a step)

Single leg work is crucial - you're only ever on one leg when running



Eccentric Calf Raise

This exercise is so important for improving tendon health, and requires patience, control and determination



3 secs up

3 sec hold at the top

3 sec down

3 sec stretch at the bottom

As many reps as possible - track your progress!

Maximum twice per week!



Single Leg Calf Raise: Max Strength

Can be done with a bar on your back, a DB/KB in hand, or on a leg press machine!



3-4 sets - 5 reps each leg
90 second recoveries

Final set - as many reps as possible

Single Leg Calf Raise: Endurance



2-3 sets - 12-15 reps each leg
(No pauses, just continuous reps)
60 second recoveries
Final set - as many reps as possible



Step 3: The Cherry On Top - Plyometrics

Plyometrics Are King

Once mobility and strength foundations are solid, we need to address plyometrics—the final piece of the puzzle for pain-free sport performance.

Think:

- Pogo Hops (double or single leg)
- Rebound Jumps
- Short, sharp ground contact drills that simulate running impact

⚠ Please be cautious: These are Final Phase drills—don't start here, especially if you're still experiencing pain. You must earn the right to jump again pain-free with diligent strength work and progressive impact.

**Perhaps you need me to coach you through that?
Let's Talk.**

Step 3: The Cherry On Top - Plyometrics

If you can do all of these things pain-free -
you're good to go!



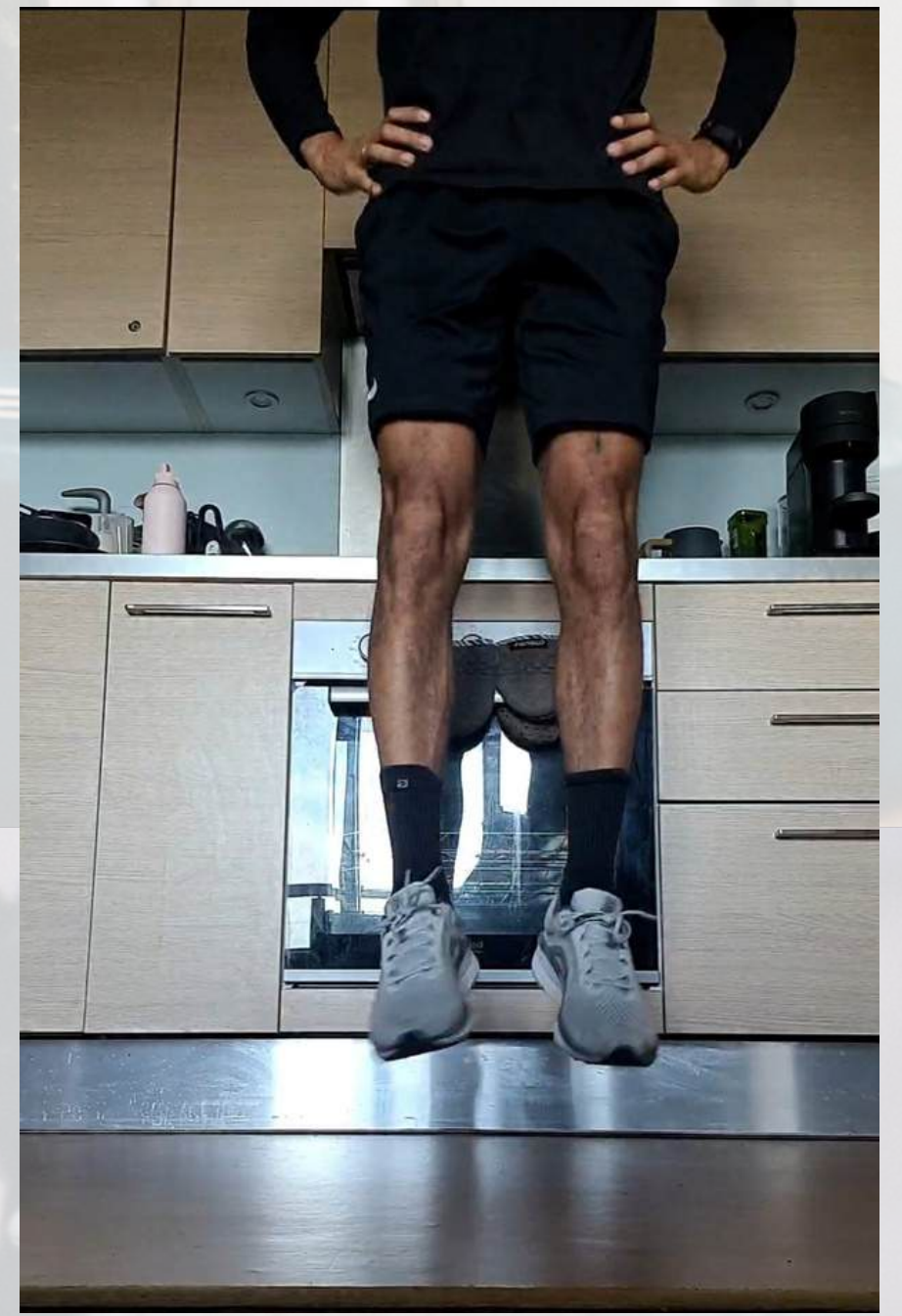
Max height
jumps - 2 x 5
reps

Hands on hips - jump
as high as possible -
athletic position on
landing!



Max height
HOPS - 2 x 5
reps

Balance 1 leg and
hop as high as
possible - try to stick
your landing!



Pogo jumps
and hops - 2
x 20 reps

Spring powerfully
through the ankles,
straight knees!



How could my workout look?

Here's an example outline of a high-performance lower body workout for ankle health - Broken into 4 parts:

- 1 – **Mobility** Warm-Up: foam rolling, ankle mobility drills, inchworms. This could also be followed with **low level plyometrics** when appropriate
- 2 – **Strength** Focus: low-reps (3-5), 70+% max load - compound movements first (squat, deadlift, lunge), then specific - calf raises (double or single leg).
- 3 – **Hypertrophy/Muscle Endurance**: higher-rep, light-moderate loads, pair 2 exercises for hypertrophy, group 3-5 exercises for endurance, including soleus strengthening (calf raise in knee flexion).
- 4 – **Conditioning**: Finisher/Core stability drills, fatiguing activities, eg. sled push/pull, loaded carries, isometric or eccentric calf exercises.



THANK YOU

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