

# Calf Strain- What causes it and how do it treat it

## Calf Muscle Strain... What causes it and how do I treat it?

Dave Middleton of Breedon Priory Health Club

### Cause.....

Calf strain occurs when the muscle at the back of the lower leg becomes damaged or inflamed. This is normally due to excessive strain or force being placed on the calf muscle. It is very common in runners and also people who take part in high impact activities and sports such as football, tennis and squash due to the rapid acceleration from a stationary position seen in these sports.

Although this injury is typically seen as a result of overuse, calf strain can also occur suddenly if the muscle becomes over stretched for example when warm-up exercises have been missed out or are inadequate for the level of activity, causing you to over stretch the muscle whilst performing running, kicking, jumping or skipping movements for example.

## What should I do?

In order to treat calf strain, rest is crucial in order to allow the injury time to heal and to prevent any further activity which could cause damage or discomfort to the injury. Applying ice to the injury is an important aspect of healing as it will reduce any swelling and inflammation as well as providing cooling pain relief to the injury. Using the RICE method (rest, ice, compression and elevation) is beneficial for the first 72 hours of the injury occurring, as it will reduce swelling to the area and by keeping the injury elevated, blood flow is restricted which can prevent further inflammation. Anti-inflammatory medications can also be taken in order to reduce swelling as well as relieving pain or aching feelings from the injury.

Heel pads are recommended for calf strain as they can help stabilise and support the area whilst relieving pressure.

When the injury has begun healing it is important for individuals to undergo a steady rehabilitation program which includes a series of stretching exercises. If you need advice of what exercises to do, I recommend you seek the advice of a sports injury/massage therapist or physiotherapist. It can take typically 1-5 weeks to heal. If you feel pain in the area when you go back to exercising, stop and seek professional treatment.

## Calf Strain



## Dave Middleton

Level 4 Sports Massage,  
Sports Injuries Therapist &  
Level 3 Personal Trainer