

Leg in plaster — and after it comes off

A broken bone in plaster



The plaster stays on for as long as we have written on your prescription. The later stages count from the day it comes off.

If your doctor wrote a different plan on your prescription, follow that instead of this page.

While in plaster

For the first 2–3 days keep the leg raised, with the ankle above the level of the hip, to bring the swelling down. Keep moving the toes, and the knee and hip if the plaster leaves them free.

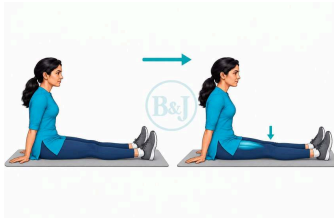
Weight bearing As written on your prescription. Walk on the plaster only if we have told you to, and only after it has fully hardened. Use the walker or crutches every time.

Toe wiggles

Curl the toes down, then spread them and pull them up, as far as the plaster allows.

10 times

Every hour while awake



Quad sets

Sit with the leg straight. Press the back of the knee down and tighten the thigh.

Hold 5 seconds

10 times

3 times a day

✓ Should feel

The thigh muscle tightening

✗ Should not feel

Knee pain



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sheet 79

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Straight leg raise

Lie down, one knee bent. Keep the other knee straight and lift the leg 20 cm.

10 times

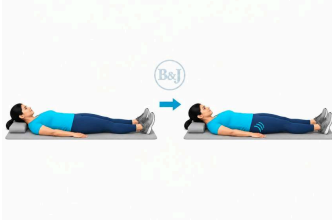
3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**

The thigh working

✗ **Should not feel**

The knee bending or back pain



Buttock squeeze

Lie on your back with the legs straight. Squeeze the buttocks together, hold, then relax.

Hold 5 seconds

10 times

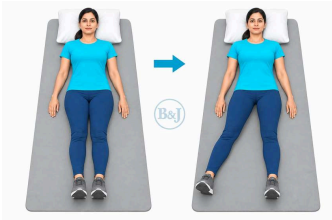
3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**

The buttocks tightening

✗ **Should not feel**

Back pain



Lying hip slide out

Lie on your back, legs straight, toes pointing up. Slide the leg out to the side and back, keeping the knee straight.

10 times

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**

The side of the hip working

✗ **Should not feel**

The toes rolling outwards

Not yet Letting the leg hang down for long, walking on the plaster unless we have allowed it, getting it wet, or driving.

Move to the next stage only after we have seen you, and the X-ray if one was planned.



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First 2 weeks after the plaster comes off

Get the ankle moving and walk normally again. Ankle swelling by evening is normal and can last for some months; raise the leg when you rest. Carry on with the thigh and hip exercises.

Weight bearing As written on your prescription. Keep the stick or crutches until you walk without a limp.



Ankle pumps

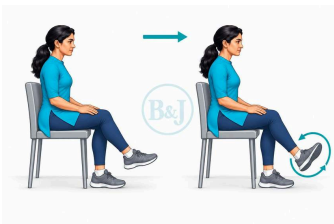
Pump the feet up and down to keep the blood moving.

20 times

Every hour while awake

✓ **Should feel**
The calf working

✗ **Should not feel**
Calf pain or swelling — tell us



Ankle circles

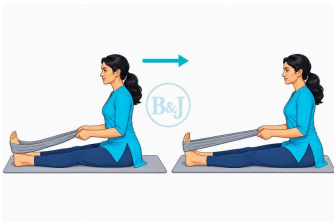
Move the ankle slowly in circles both ways.

10 each way

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**
The ankle loosening

✗ **Should not feel**
Sharp pain



Towel calf stretch, sitting

Sit with the leg straight. Loop a towel round the ball of the foot and pull the toes towards you.

Hold 30 seconds

3 times

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**
A stretch in the calf

✗ **Should not feel**
Sharp pain



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Sitting heel and toe raises

Sit with both feet flat on the floor. Lift the heels, lower them, then lift the toes.

10 times

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**

The calf and the front of the shin working

✗ **Should not feel**

Sharp pain



Towel toe curls

Scrunch a towel with the toes.

10 times

Daily

✓ **Should feel**

The foot muscles working

✗ **Should not feel**

Cramp

Not yet Running, jumping, or standing on tiptoe on this leg alone.

Move to the next stage only after we have seen you, and the X-ray if one was planned.



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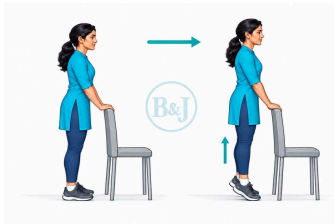
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2 to 6 weeks after the plaster comes off

Walk without a limp; build calf strength and balance. Carry on with the earlier exercises.

Weight bearing Full, unless we have told you otherwise.



Calf raises

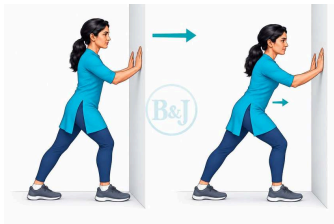
Rise onto both toes and lower under control.

15 times

Daily

✓ **Should feel**
The calf working

✗ **Should not feel**
Sharp pain



Calf stretch, knee straight

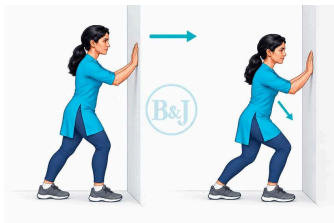
Hands on a wall, back leg straight, heel down.

Hold 30 seconds

3 times

✓ **Should feel**
A stretch in the upper calf

✗ **Should not feel**
Pain in the heel



Calf stretch, knee bent

The same position but bend the back knee slightly.

Hold 30 seconds

3 times

✓ **Should feel**
A stretch lower down

✗ **Should not feel**
Sharp pain



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Single-leg balance

Stand on one leg beside a worktop. Balance prevents falls, and preventing falls prevents fractures.

30 seconds

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**

Working to stay steady

✗ **Should not feel**

Losing balance — hold on



Heel-to-toe walking

Walk heel to toe along a line, beside a support.

10 steps

Daily

✓ **Should feel**

Steadier walking

✗ **Should not feel**

Wobbling — use the wall

Not yet Running, jumping or sport, until we clear you.

Looking after the plaster

- A plaster takes up to 2 days to harden fully. Until then, rest it on a pillow and do not press, knock or walk on it.
- Keep it dry. For a bath, cover it with two plastic bags taped at the top, and still keep it out of the water.
- Never push anything inside to scratch, and do not pull out the padding or trim the edges.
- No oil, powder or cream under the plaster. For itching, blow cool air inside with a fan or a hair dryer on the cold setting.
- Do not cut or remove the plaster yourself. We remove it in the clinic.

Preventing a clot in the leg

- A leg in plaster can develop a blood clot. Moving the toes, knee and hip often, and drinking enough water, help prevent it.
- If we have prescribed injections or tablets to thin the blood, take every dose until we tell you to stop.
- Tell us if you or a close relative has had a clot before, if you take hormone tablets, or if you might be pregnant.

When the plaster comes off

- The skin will be dry and flaky. Wash it gently with soap and lukewarm water, pat it dry and put on a plain moisturiser. Do not scrub or pick at it.
- The limb will feel stiff, weak and thinner for a few weeks. This is normal and improves with the exercises.
- Some swelling, aching and stiffness, worse by evening or in cold weather, can last for some months.



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Stop and telephone us if

- Sudden breathlessness or chest pain — go to the nearest hospital
- Pain that keeps getting worse despite the painkillers, or is much worse when you move the toes
- The toes become numb, tingling, cold, pale or blue
- You cannot move the toes
- The calf or thigh becomes swollen, tight or painful
- The plaster feels too tight, or rubs or burns in one spot
- The plaster is cracked, soft, wet or loose, or something has fallen inside it
- A bad smell or discharge from under the plaster, or fever



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