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CALF STRETCH

Objective: To improve flexibility and relax the muscles of the calves.



Research has shown that stretching the calf muscles has a link to verbal skills and can help with communication in speech impaired children with autism.

How to

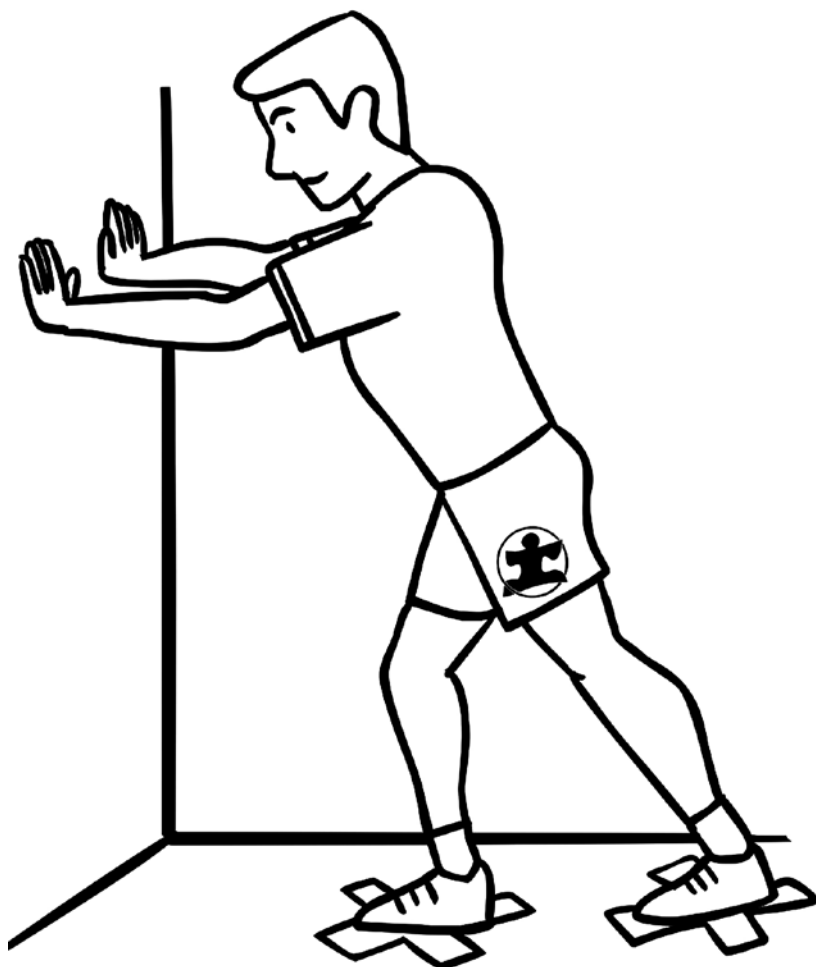
- Have the child step forward with the left leg, keeping the right leg about 12–18 inches behind (length depends on size of the child). Toes should point forward while hands can be placed on hips, the wall, a chair, or a stable object.
- Next, slowly bend the left leg forward while keeping the back heel flat. Repeat on the opposite leg.

How many

- Hold for up to 30 seconds on each leg.
- If the child bounces into the stretch, have them do up to 20 bounces.

Coaching tips

- Keep toes pointing forward.
- Back heel always flat.
- Have the child count while holding the position.

Calf Stretch

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HIP EXTENSIONS

Objective: To improve the function and development of the gluteal and hamstring muscles.



Hip Extensions will help to reduce the risk of lower back pain by developing the gluteal (butt) and hamstring muscles.

■ How to

- Have the child lie on their back with their knees bent, feet flat, and neck relaxed. Then have them lift their butt up so the knee, hip, and shoulder are in a straight line. Control the movement on the way down and repeat.

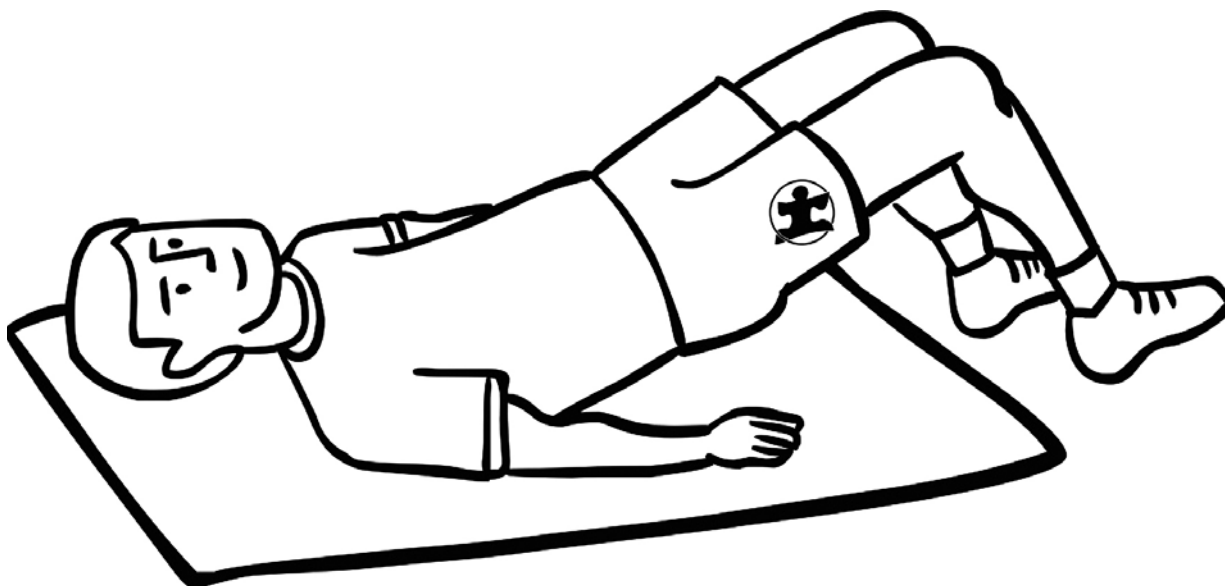
■ How many

- Perform two to four sets for 6–15 reps each.

■ Coaching tips

- Try to not let the butt hit the ground, helping to reduce the risk of injury, while challenging the muscles.
- If the child begins doing this exercise fast, that's OK, they're moving! Each time, work to make it a more controlled movement.

Hip Extensions



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LOG EXERCISES

Objective: To help improve the individual's proprioception while increasing the flexibility and range of motion of the shoulder girdle.



These Log Exercises are like self-massages and can help reduce stress and tension in the neck. They are very important for our children but can also benefit mom and dad.

■ How to

- It is important that you model how to get onto the log. When the child squats down to sit on the log you may have to adjust the log during the process. It is important that the butt is on the far end of the log and that the child then lies back. The back of the head should be on the log and in a neutral position and the neck should be relaxed.

■ How many

- Begin with 30 seconds for the general stretch. If they want to stay on longer, that's fine as they are in a safe position.
- When performing the arm actions, have them do 8–12 reps.

■ Coaching tips

- Palms should face up.
- If the hands are not on the ground, that is OK. Don't force them down, as this means that the muscles of the neck and shoulder girdle are tight. This will happen naturally, keep practicing and watch to see the improvement.
- Make sure the neck is not arched back. You may have to prompt to get the neck into the neutral position.

Log Exercise—General Stretch

