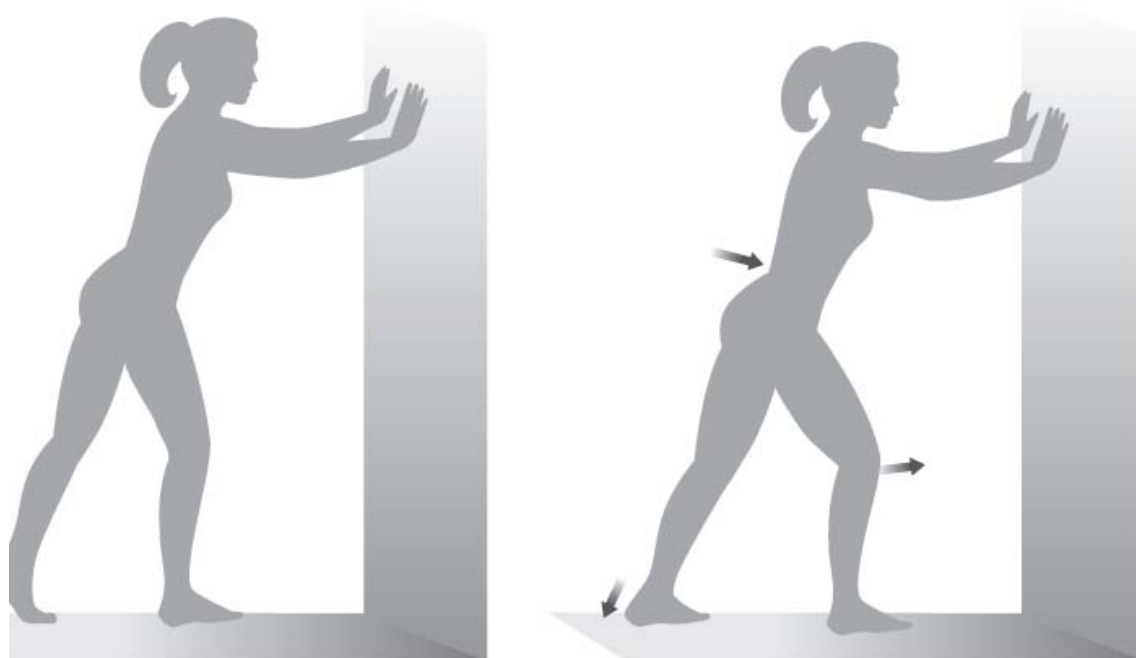


Proper Calf Stretch

Legs in general and calves in particular, are the focus of most stretching regimens. Here's a better way to stretch using the agonist – antagonist phenomenon we discussed in Part 3 of the book.



After a short warm up, stand facing a wall (about six inches away) with your hands at face level against the wall.

1. Place one foot forward and one back, approximately a foot and a half apart. Rise up as high as possible on the ball of the farthest foot back, contract your calf muscles and hold it for a few seconds.
2. Then drop your heel to the ground slowly, relax and lean forward until you feel a burning or tightness in your calf muscles. At this moment, actively contract the muscles in the front of your lower leg by extending your toes upward. The first maneuver after the contraction relaxes the calf muscle better due to its natural refractory period and this last maneuver relaxes it further when its antagonist is contracted. Hold for a count of ten-to-twenty seconds and continue to breathe.
3. Repeat two more times. Switch the position of your legs and perform the same maneuvers (steps 1, 2 and 3) on the other side. Now you have performed one set of calf stretching. It is best to perform 3 total sets (per leg) of this stretching technique.