

# Foot Drop Exercises for Stroke Patients with Pictures

February 3, 2017



The best treatment for foot drop after stroke is *rehab exercise*.

Hands down, bar none.

But before we dive into our best foot drop exercises, we would like to briefly mention the difference between passive and active exercise and how to maximize your results.

Then we will dive straight into the exercises, which all came from our [stroke therapy program FlintFit](#).

## A Note on Passive vs Active Exercises

When you first start out with foot drop exercises, it will most likely be impossible to move your affected foot – and that’s okay! You can still regain movement in your foot with rehab exercises.

You can do this by starting with *passive exercises*, where you perform an exercise by assisting your affected limb. For example, if your left leg is affected, then you can use your right side to help move your left leg.

This differs from *active exercise* because during active exercise you do not assist yourself. You perform the entire movement on your own.

## The Key to Effective Foot Drop Exercises

You can graduate from passive exercise to active exercise with *repetitive practice*. That's why we recommend repeating all of the following exercises at least 10 times.

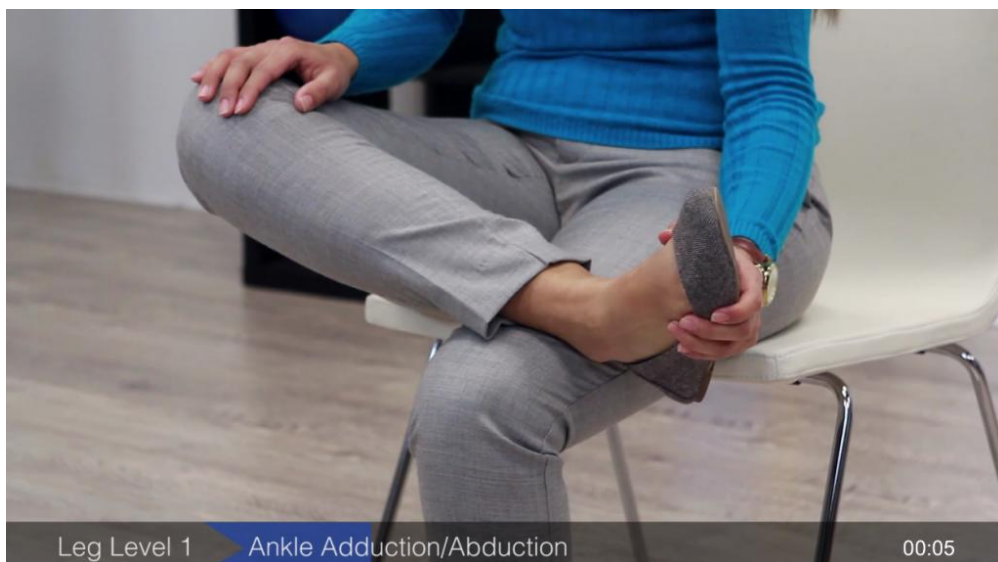
This is the essence of neuroplasticity, which is the #1 concept that every stroke survivor should know about.

*Neuroplasticity* works best when you repeat your exercises over and over. Because each time you repeat an exercise, you strengthen new connections in your brain responsible for movement.

The more you repeat, the better your brain becomes at the movement – even if you just start out with passive exercises. Passive exercises are the best way to reintroduce movement into the body.

Now, let's get exercising!

### (Passive) Ankle Adduction/Abduction





Cross your affected leg over your other leg at the knee.

Then, use your nonaffected hand to move your foot up and down (passive exercise). Focus on initiating all the movement from your ankle.

For extra challenge, perform without assistance (active exercise).

Repeat 10 times.

## (Passive) Ankle Dorsiflexion





With your affected leg still crossed over your other leg, move into ankle dorsiflexion.

Use your unaffected hand to move your foot up towards your knee, then back down. Again, focus on imitating all movement from your ankle.

Repeat 10 times.

## (Passive) Assisted Toe Raises





Toe raises are the most difficult movement to perform with foot drop. If you have difficulty with this movement – that’s okay!

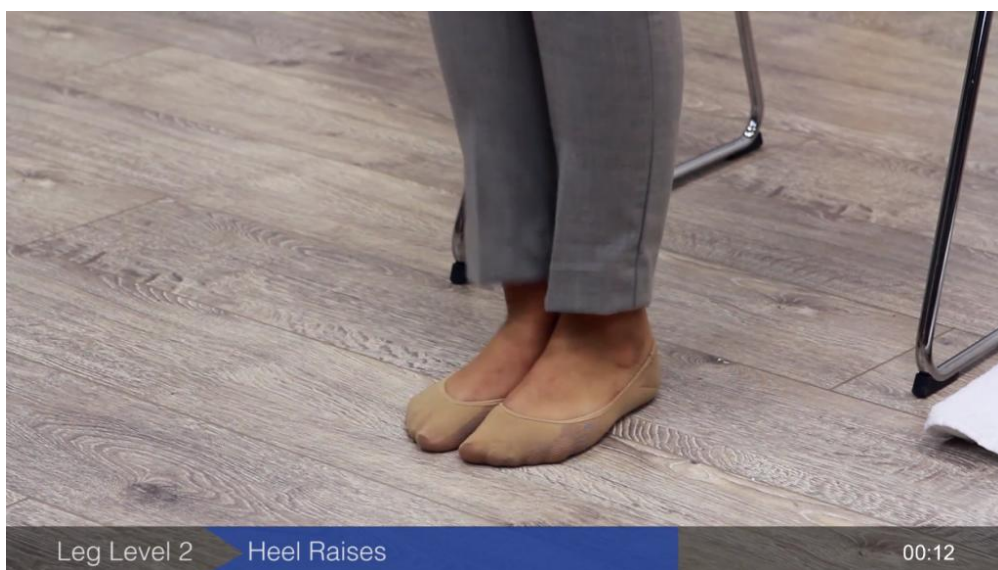
Even with passive exercise you can start reintroducing movement into that area.

To get into the starting position, place your unaffected foot underneath your affected foot. Then, use your nonaffected foot to assist your affected foot up while keeping your heel on the ground. Then release back down.

Repeat 10 times.

Once you regain the ability to perform these without assistance, do active exercise for added challenge.

## (Active) Heel Raises

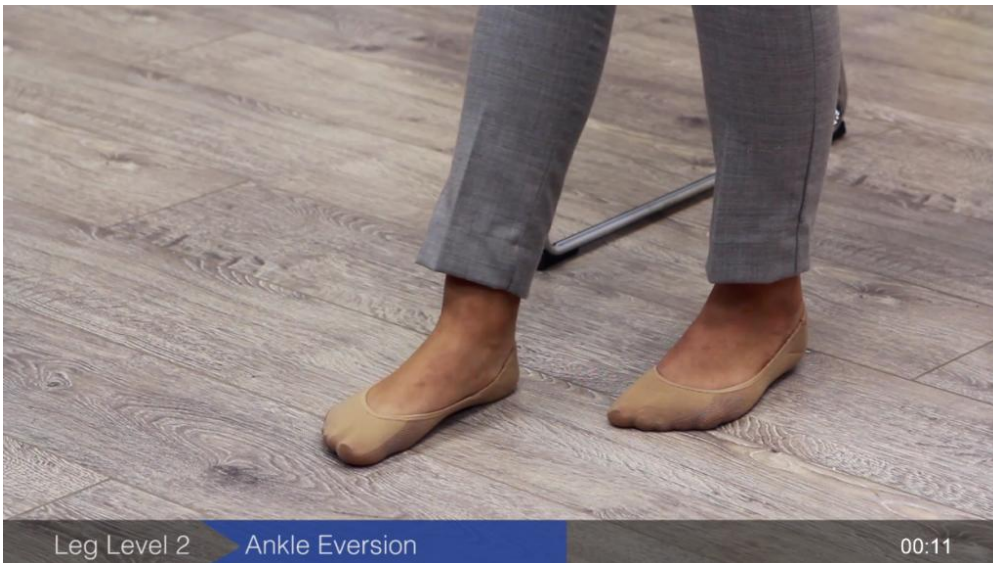


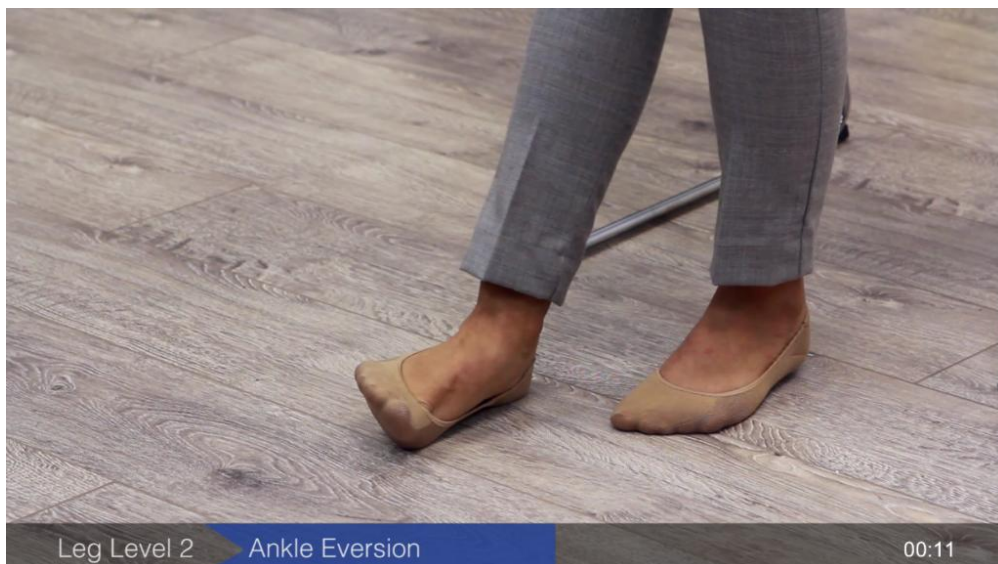


This exercise is the opposite of toe raises. Although this may not feel like it's helping with your foot drop, it will help train the surrounding muscles.

To perform heel raises, start with your feet flat on the ground. Then, point your toes and lift your heels off the ground. Repeat 10 times.

## (Active) Ankle Eversion





For this exercise, place your affected foot flat on the ground.

Then, lift the outside edge of your foot and toes up, then relax back down.

Really focus on initiating the movement from your foot and ankle and avoid making the movement with your leg.

Repeat 10 times.

## Repetition + Consistency + Challenge = Recovery

The more you repeat each exercise, the better you will become.

The more consistent you are with your practice, the faster you will heal.

The more you challenge yourself, the more stimulation your brain will get, which is essential for recovery.

That's why repetition, consistency, and challenge are the cornerstones of an effective recovery.

So don't just do these exercises and forget about them. Schedule these exercises into your calendar, and track your progress in your journal.

To help you out with this, you can sign up for a [FlintFit free trial](#) and use our built-in calendar and progress tracking features. You will find these exact same exercises and more on FlintFit.

We hope to see you there!