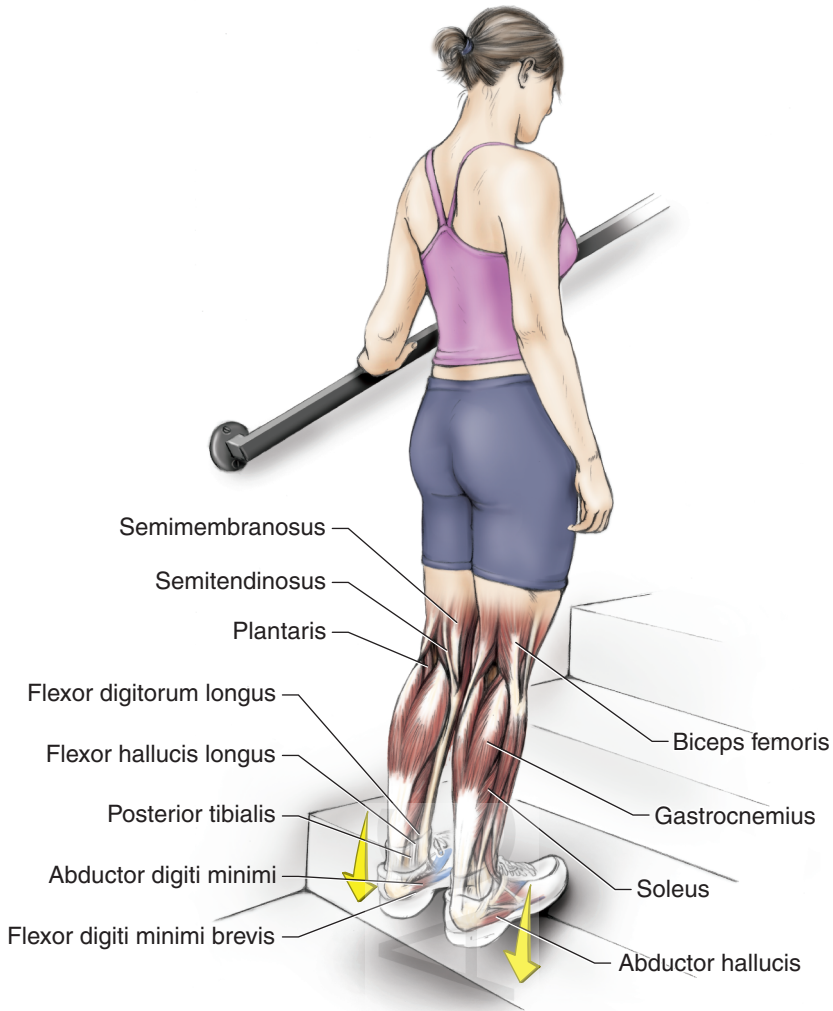


Double Plantar Flexor Stretch



Technique

Stand upright on the edge of a stair or beam, with both heels unsupported out past the edge.

Keep the right and left knees straight, and hold on to a support with at least one hand.

Lower both heels down as far as possible.

Muscles Stretched

Most-stretched muscles: Gastrocnemius, soleus, plantaris, popliteus, flexor digitorum longus, flexor digitorum brevis, flexor hallucis longus, flexor hallucis brevis, posterior tibialis, quadratus plantae, flexor digiti minimi brevis, abductor digiti minimi, abductor hallucis.

Lesser-stretched muscles: Semitendinosus, semimembranosus, biceps femoris.

Commentary

It is more comfortable to do this stretch while wearing shoes. Always support the body—an unsupported body could cause the muscles to contract and not stretch. You will increase the extent of the stretch if you work one leg at a time. After the heels reach their lowest point, you can apply more stretch by bending the knees slightly. This will stretch the posterior tibialis, flexor hallucis longus, and flexor digitorum longus muscles; at the same time it will reduce the stretch on the hamstring muscles. Placing the ball of the foot on the edge of the stairs or beam will increase the stretch on the origin (top part) of these muscle groups. Placing the midsection of the foot on the edge of the stairs or beam increases the stretch on the lower portion of these muscles.