KILOMETERKLUB

YOUR CALF STRAIN REHAB GUIDE FROM LIESEL

What I want you to do first at home

If this were my runner in week one, I would keep the plan simple: calm the irritation, remove the biggest trigger, and start rebuilding capacity instead of waiting passively for a miracle.

- Unload enough to restore pain-free walking
- Rebuild calf strength and endurance before chasing speed
- Use progressive heel raises and later hopping/spring work
- Respect soleus loading: bent-knee calf capacity matters as much as straight-knee
- Keep the tissue moving gently, but do not stretch aggressively into sharp pain early on.
- Use pain and next-day response as your guide rather than optimism alone.

What I would do in clinic

In clinic, I would first make sure the diagnosis fits the pattern and that we are not missing a more serious problem. Then I would identify the biggest load driver, test the weak links, calm the angry tissue down enough to let you move, and build a plan you can actually follow in real life. I would also use your running history, current schedule, shoes, terrain and gym habits to find the pattern that keeps this injury alive.

Strength & rehab prescription

The exercise plan should feel purposeful, not random. I usually break rehab into phases so the runner knows what matters now and what can wait.

- Early phase — isometric calf holds, double-leg calf raises, seated calf work
- Strength phase — single-leg calf raises, bent-knee soleus raises, heavy slow calf loading
- Late phase — pogo hops, skipping, strides, hills

Cross-training that usually works

Usually worth trying: Cycling once tolerated, Pool running, Upper-body conditioning, Strength work around symptoms.

Usually better to avoid early on: Hill sprints too early, Aggressive stretching into sharp pain, Long walks if they flare the calf badly.

Your best option is the one that lets you keep fitness without making tomorrow worse.

Road back to running

Returning to running is not the same thing as returning to full training. I want the tissue to tolerate easy impact first, then volume, then the spicy stuff.

1. Walk normally first
2. Restore calf raises and endurance
3. Start with short flat easy runs
4. Bring back hills and speed after spring tolerance returns
5. If the tissue changes the way you walk or run, you are not ready for the next step yet.

When I want you to get help

See a clinician if swelling is pronounced, pain is severe, or you are concerned about a tendon tear or vascular problem. Red flags I would take seriously include: Marked swelling, redness, heat, or suspicion of DVT; A loud pop or inability to push off; Severe pain at rest or major bruising.

If you are still not coming right, book a consultation with me through our website at

www.kilometerklub.com/get-help