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Calf stretching may benefit peripheral artery disease patients

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The American Heart Association (AHA) shared the results of a preliminary abstract on calf stretching and leg pain in peripheral artery disease (PAD) patients that was presented at the AHA Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis and Vascular Biology | Peripheral Vascular Disease 2017 Scientific Sessions recently.

The study, which was conducted with six women and seven men with an average age of 71, began with four weeks of walking without the special stretches. During the next four weeks, the patients used a splint to stretch their calf muscles five days per week in 30-minute sessions. The participants' walking ability and blood flow were compared after each four-week session.

The study found that after participating in daily calf stretches for a month, the participants' calf arteries' blood flow improved an average of 3.7 to 5.2 percent, increased the distance they could walk in 6 minutes and increased how far they could walk before leg pain forced them to stop and rest, the website posting said.

“This is a very safe, easy intervention that can be done at home and has the potential to really improve your tolerance for walking and get you into a walking program,” Dr. Judy Muller-Delp, senior study author and Florida State University College of Medicine in Tallahassee professor of biomedical sciences, said in the release.

ORGANIZATIONS IN THIS STORY

American Heart Association

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