AgelessCoach™
AGE STRONG. LIVE LONG.

# Leg Cramps at Night: Stop One, Prevent the Next

The eight steps that end a cramp while it is happening, the stretch that prevents the next one, and the old remedy to leave in the cupboard.

✓ **Verified against published guidance** from Cleveland Clinic, Mayo Clinic & the U.S. Food and Drug Administration · sources below

**Go to the emergency room if a leg cramp lasts longer than 10 minutes or becomes unbearably painful. See a provider promptly if cramps come with swelling or numbness in the leg, changes in the skin of the leg, muscle cramps elsewhere in your body, or if they wake you over and over. Cleveland Clinic lists every one of those as a reason to be seen rather than to keep stretching.**

## ✓ Do This

### Stretch the Muscle First

- Straighten the leg, pull toes to shin
- Hold a chair so you do not fall
- Thigh cramp: heel toward the buttock

COACH'S TIP Stretching is step one of eight.

### Massage, Then Stand and Walk

- Hands or a roller on the muscle
- Wiggle the leg as you walk around
- Press both feet flat on the floor

COACH'S TIP Movement finishes what the stretch starts.

### Use Heat or Cold

- Heating pad or a warm bath
- Mayo suggests massaging with ice
- Ice wrapped in a towel on the area

COACH'S TIP Either one. Keep both within reach.

### Stretch Your Calves Before Bed

- Stand about 3 feet from a wall
- Count to five, 5 minutes, 3x a day
- Lean in, arms out, feet flat

COACH'S TIP The one habit with the best odds.

### Prepare the Bed Space

- Heating pad beside the bed
- Loosen the sheets at the foot
- Massage roller beside it

COACH'S TIP A 2am cramp is not a shopping trip.

### Review Your Medicines

- Statins and diuretics list cramps
- Weigh the drug against the effect
- So do gabapentin and naproxen

COACH'S TIP Ask a provider. Stop nothing alone.

## ✗ Do Not

### Do Not Take Quinine for Cramps

- FDA: 665 reports, 93 deaths
- Boxed warning covers this exact use
- Approved now for malaria only

COACH'S TIP The oldest remedy is the worst one.

### Do Not Expect a Preventive Pill

- No medicine works every time
- Cleveland Clinic says so plainly
- Magnesium shows a little evidence

COACH'S TIP There is no pill that prevents them.

### Do Not Confuse Cramps With Restless Legs

- Restless legs is not painful
- A cramp is a clenched, sore muscle
- It is an urge to move, and moving eases it

COACH'S TIP Different problem, different fix.

### Do Not Ignore Cramps Plus Other Signs

- Swelling or numbness in the leg
- Cramps elsewhere in the body
- Changes in the skin of the leg

COACH'S TIP That combination gets looked at.

### Do Not Drink Through It

- Cleveland Clinic: limit alcohol
- Aim for eight glasses of water
- Limit caffeinated drinks too

COACH'S TIP Hydration sits on the prevention list.

### Do Not Sit Still All Day and Hope

- Long sitting is a listed cause
- So is poor posture during the day
- So is standing on concrete floors

COACH'S TIP The daytime sets up the night.

## THE NUMBERS BEHIND THIS SHEET

Three figures worth knowing

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|---|---|
| Up to 60% | of adults get leg cramps at night |
| 3 in 4 | reported leg cramps happen at night |
| 93 | deaths in FDA quinine reports, 1969 to 2006 |

**Sources:** Cleveland Clinic, Leg Cramps · Mayo Clinic, Night leg cramps · U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Unapproved Drugs and Patient Harm. **Educational content, not medical advice.** Talk with your doctor.