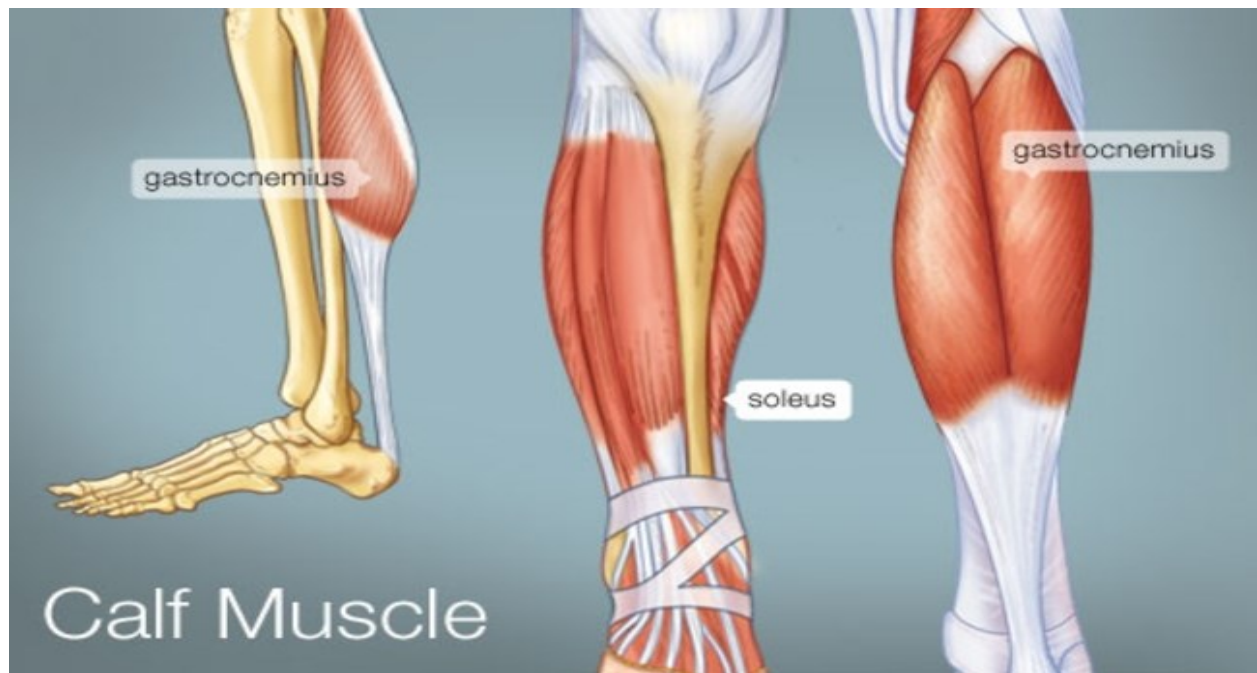


# What does the calf muscles do?



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@2020

The calf muscle, on the back of the lower leg, is actually made up of two muscles:

- The gastrocnemius is the larger calf muscle, forming the bulge visible beneath the skin. The gastrocnemius has two parts or "heads," which together create its diamond shape.
- The soleus is a smaller, flat muscle that lies underneath the gastrocnemius muscle.

The gastrocnemius and soleus muscles taper and merge at the base of the calf muscle. Tough connective tissue at the bottom of the calf muscle merges with the Achilles tendon. The Achilles tendon inserts into the heel bone (calcaneus). During walking, running, or jumping, the calf muscle pulls the heel up to allow forward movement.

Along with the soleus **muscle**, the gastrocnemius forms half of the **calf muscle**. Its **function** is plantar flexing the foot at the ankle joint and flexing the leg at the knee joint.