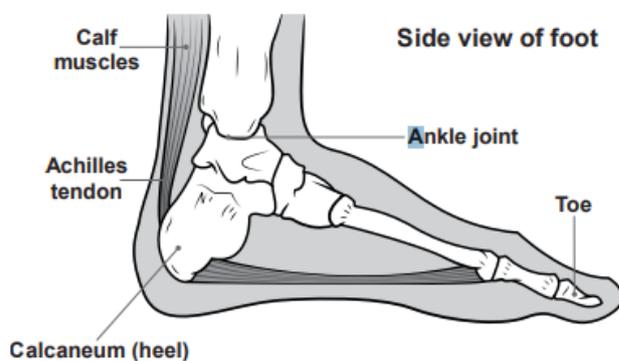


Patient Information Leaflet about Achilles Tendinopathy

The aim of this leaflet is to give you some understanding of the problems you have with your Achilles tendon and to provide some advice on how to manage this. It should be used in conjunction with the information you may have been given by your healthcare professional.

What is Achilles Tendinopathy?

Achilles tendinopathy is a condition that can cause pain, swelling, stiffness and weakness of the Achilles tendon.



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Achilles tendinopathy is a condition that can cause pain, swelling, stiffness and weakness of the Achilles tendon.

What are the possible symptoms?

- Pain generally tends to be worse in the morning, or during and after exercise.
- Some swelling and, or pain can occur around the tendon and calf area.
- The tendon may be very tender to touch and you may have increased discomfort wearing shoes that press against it.

What can contribute to the causes of Achilles Tendinopathy?

- Being overweight.
- Wearing unsuitable footwear e.g. flip flops, high heels, or sandals which don't support the feet or changes in the heel height of your shoes.
- Foot position such as high arches or flat feet make it more difficult for the Achilles tendon to work properly.
- Overloading of the tendon with, for example, prolonged periods of standing, walking, running, jumping and increased intensity of training or sports.
- Stiffness or injury to any surrounding area such as the ankle, foot or calf.

- Tightness in the muscles up the back of your leg.
- Occasionally it can be caused by inflammatory diseases e.g ankylosing spondylitis or psoriatic arthritis.

What tests may be done?

In the majority of cases of Achilles tendon pain, you do not need an x ray or any other tests to confirm what is wrong. The main way to diagnose an Achilles tendon problem is through what you tell us and examining your foot and leg.

What else can be done?

If your pain does not get better after a period of 3 months of following the exercises and advice in this leaflet, see a healthcare professional who can access your foot and leg and may recommend further treatment.

What can you do to help the pain in your Achilles Tendon?

- Have patience, most people's Achilles tendon pain does get better by following the advice given in this leaflet but it may take several months to get better.
- Follow the exercises in this leaflet and keep active as we know that rest does not help this problem to improve.
- Aim for a healthy body weight.
- Avoid wearing unsuitable footwear that is unsupportive or very flat. Shoes with shock absorbing properties are suitable. Check the heel tab at the back of the shoe – make sure it is not irritating your heel or tendon.



- Follow the advice from your community pharmacist or other healthcare professional about taking medication. It is important to take any medication regularly.
- Ice can sometimes be helpful in the early stages of Achilles tendinopathy to reduce pain. Only apply an ice pack if wrapped in a damp towel and only for around 5 – 10 minutes. Please check your skin regularly as ice can burn.

Exercises to strengthen the Achilles tendon



Figure 1 Double Heel raises



Figure 2 Single heel raises

Stand on the ground and slowly go up onto your tip toes on both feet and then lower your heels to the ground.

Progress onto doing this exercise on one leg only and repeat the exercise on the contralateral limb.

Perform the exercises with your knees straight and with your knees bent. Try to start doing 3 x 5 repetitions per day and build up slowly to 3 x10 repetitions and then finally aim to do 3x 15 repetitions every other day.

Expect some discomfort while performing these exercises however, if it gets extremely painful, we would advise you to stop for a few days and then begin again.

Exercises to stretch the calf muscles.

Exercise 1. Seated Calf Stretch

Use a towel wrapped around the ball of your foot and pull your foot towards you until you feel a stretch. Hold 30 seconds and repeat up to 10 times.



Figure 1: Seated Calf Muscle stretch

Exercise 2: Calf Stretch

Stand with affected leg behind the other leg, keeping the heel down on the floor and the knee straight. Lean forward bending the front knee forward until you feel a stretch in your calf and Achilles tendon (ankle area). Hold 30 seconds and repeat 10 times.



Figure 2: Standing calf stretch

3. Exercise 3: Calf stretch with back knee bent

Repeat as exercise 2 but with the back knee slightly bent. Hold the stretch for 30-45 seconds and repeat 10 times on both legs.



Figure 4: Calf stretch with back knee bent

