

Achilles Tendinopathy/Tendinitis



PODIATRY
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What is it?

Achilles tendinopathy is a chronic condition that is associated with

degeneration of the Achilles tendon. The Achilles is the insertional tendon of the Gastrocnemius and Soleal muscles (aka calf muscles) and is essential for everyday activities such as walking, running and jumping. The tendon is subject to high repetitive stresses and in conjunction with certain risk factors, can eventually begin to degenerate or break-down. This degeneration usually occurs in 2 locations: the insertion of the Achilles tendon onto the heel bone or mid-way through the tendon, hence the terms, insertional and mid-portion Achilles tendinopathy.

Why did I get it?

Achilles tendinopathy can be caused by many factors and is most commonly seen in the active middle aged population (women > men). Most patients with the condition can often present with many of the following risk factors;

- Tight calf muscles
- Increased weight
- Incorrect footwear
- Biomechanical foot issues
- Sudden increase in physical activity
- Previous trauma to tendon

Symptoms:

- Heel pain and swelling (at the back of the heel)
- Thickening of the tendon
- Limited range of motion when flexing the foot.
- The skin on the heel may feel hot to touch.
- Tenderness in the affected area

ACHILLES TENDINOSIS/TENDINITIS



How is it diagnosed?

A thorough clinical examination will most commonly diagnose Achilles Tendinopathy. Depending on severity of symptoms, you may be referred for an ultrasound to determine the extent of the degeneration and to make sure there aren't any tears in the tendon.

Treatment

- Strapping
- Ice
- Footwear advice
- Moderated rest
- Eccentric Loading exercises
- Compression
- Custom orthotics
- Heel raise in shoes
- Anti-inflammatories
- Neuromuscular needling

Prognosis:

Although Achilles tendinopathy is a debilitating condition, most patients respond to conservative treatment. However, this process can take up to 9 months depending on how long the degeneration has been occurring for & how severe the pain has become. Surgery is very rarely recommended, however is an option for chronic cases that show no improvement to conservative treatments.