

Stretching Exercises

It is important to stretch thoroughly through the two muscles in your calf and also the Achilles tendon. The stretches should be held for 20-30 seconds and repeated 5 times.

Gastrocnemius Stretch (Calf Stretch)



Soleus Stretch (Calf Stretch)



Soleus with FHL Stretch
(Foot & Calf Stretch)



Strengthening Exercises

A good rehabilitation programme will involve strengthening the calf and Achilles tendon.

The exercises below are an example but may be painful to do so check with your physiotherapist if you have any problems.

Double Leg Heel Raises



Single Leg Heel Raises



Achilles Tendinosis



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What Is It?

The Achilles tendon is the large tendon at the back of the ankle. It connects the calf muscles (Gastrocnemius and Soleus) to the heel.

Achilles tendinosis (otherwise known as Achilles tendonitis) is a condition when the tendon becomes inflamed and sore.

Achilles tendinosis can be acute or chronic. If the warning signs are ignored or it does not recover fully, it can become chronic which is a difficult condition to treat.

Causes

The most common cause is overuse or a change in training. It is common in runners especially if training on hard surfaces and up hills. Exercise and repetitive exercise can also be responsible.

If your feet roll in (pronation) or you have high arches when you run, this can increase the strain on the Achilles tendon.

Incorrect footwear or worn out trainers can increase the chances of developing Achilles tendinosis.

Diagram of Achilles Tendon & Calf Muscles



Acute Symptoms

- Pain at the back of the ankle with exercise
- Swelling or redness over the Achilles tendon
- Pain when you raise up on to your toes

Chronic Symptoms

- Pain and stiffness in the Achilles area especially in the morning
- Pain in the tendon when walking, especially up hills or stairs

Diagnosis

Achilles tendinosis can be diagnosed by a physiotherapist or doctor. Generally further investigations are not necessary.

Treatment

Initially it is best to rest and apply ice after exercise or aggravation. Then see your physiotherapist or doctor to get a full assessment and any of the following treatments:

- anti-inflammatory medication
- identify the causes and prescribe orthotics or a change in shoes or training
- tape the back of the legs to support the tendon
- ultrasound
- massage and mobilisation of the tendon or muscles
- exercises to stretch and strengthen the tendon