

ACHILLIES TENDONITIS

WHAT IS ACHILLIES TENDONITIS?

The achillies tendon is a large tendon that connects the major muscles of the calf to the heel bone. When this tendon is placed under too much stress and stretched too much it become overworked and inflamed.



WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF ACHILLIES TENDONITIS?

Tendonitis develops from overuse of the tendons. Once the condition has developed, flare-ups occurs each time the attaching muscles are used. The following symptoms often occur with achillies tendonitis;

- dull or sharp pain along the back of the ankle or lower leg, usually close to the heel
- reduced ankle flexibility
- redness or heat over the affected area
- pain and inflammation after use of the attaching muscles (ie. After walking, running, jumping)
- pain and stiffness after periods of disuse of the muscles (ie. After sleeping or sitting for prolonged period of time)



WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MY CONDITION?

Osteopathic treatment is very useful in aiding the recovery of achillies tendonitis, but there are many things you can do between treatments to speed up your recovery.

- Speak to your osteopath about whether they think orthotics would be appropriate for you. Bring your runners to your next appointment, so that your Osteopath can assess your wear patterns and foot mechanics.
- Avoid runner or playing sport in old, worn out shoes.
- Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory drugs, such as neurophen and voltaren can be helpful in reducing inflammation. Speak to your pharmacist about a suitable medication for you.
- Try and avoid use of the affected area, and avoid activities that you know will aggravate it, such as running. If you cannot avoid use of the area, then ice it afterwards to reduce inflammation. An ice cycle takes 30 minutes – 10 minutes ice on, 10 minutes ice off, 10 minutes ice on.
- Try alternative exercises, such as swimming, pool running, cycling, which are non-weight-bearing and will not aggravate the tendon further.
- Calf stretches – Gastrocnemius stretch: stand with leg in front, bent at the knee, and the other leg stretched out behind, with the knee straight. Hold for 30 seconds, then repeat with the other leg. To increase the intensity of the stretch, you can stand on a step and let your heel drop off the edge of it. Soleus stretch: (a smaller, deeper calf muscle), bend the back leg at the knee. You should feel a stretch lower in the calf muscle, closer to the heel. Hold for 30 seconds, then repeat with other leg.
- Surgery to scrap the scar tissue off the tendon should be considered only as a last resort. Surgery is expensive, prologues healing time, and generally is not very effective at resolving the tendonitis, instead it tends to stimulate the growth of more scar tissue.

