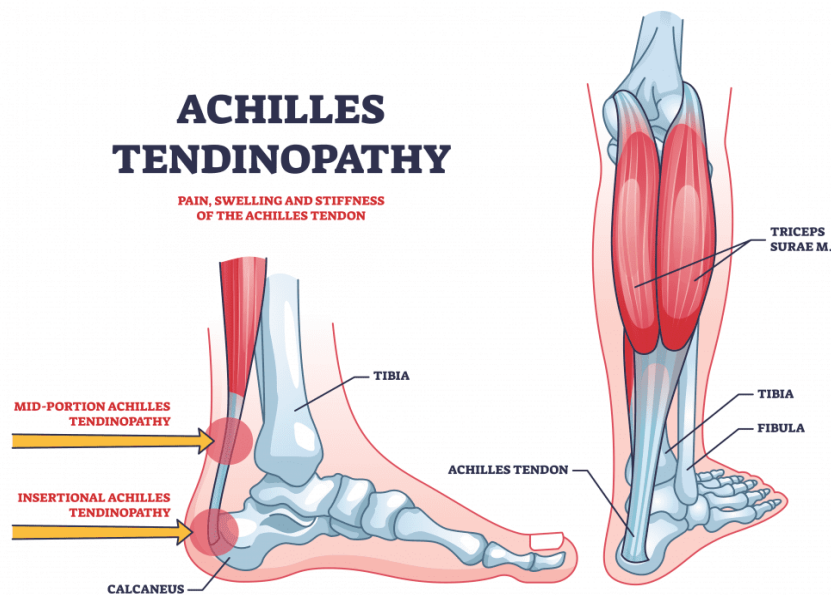


Achilles Tendinopathy



What is Achilles Tendinopathy?

Achilles tendinopathy is irritation or degeneration of the Achilles tendon — the strong tendon at the back of your ankle connecting the calf muscles to the heel bone. It commonly develops due to **overuse, sudden increase in activity**, or tight/weak calf muscles.

Common Symptoms

- Pain or stiffness at the back of the heel
- Pain worse first thing in the morning
- Pain during or after walking, running, or climbing stairs
- Tenderness when pressing the tendon
- Swelling or thickening of the tendon
- Stiffness after rest

Causes / Risk Factors

- Sudden increase in walking, running, gym, or sport
- Poor footwear or worn-out shoes
- Tight calf muscles
- Reduced ankle mobility
- Training on hard or uneven surfaces
- Being overweight
- Reduced tendon strength with age

What Helps? (Initial Management)

1. Load Management

- Reduce painful activities temporarily (running/jumping).
- Keep active with low-impact exercise (cycling, swimming).

2. Ice (if painful)

- Ice pack for 10–15 minutes after activity.

3. Footwear

- Supportive trainers with good heel cushioning.
- Avoid flat shoes, flip-flops, or barefoot walking.

4. Pain Relief

- Paracetamol or ibuprofen (if appropriate).
- Topical anti-inflammatory gels can help.

Rehabilitation Exercises

Do exercises daily unless pain is severe. Mild discomfort is normal.

Calf Stretches (Gastrocnemius & Soleus)

- Stand facing a wall.
- Stretch with knee straight (upper calf), then with knee bent (lower calf).

- Hold 30 sec, repeat 3 times.

Heel-Raise Strengthening

Start on both feet, progress to single-leg when comfortable.

Stage 1 – Seated Heel Raises (low load)

- 3 sets of 15 reps.

Stage 2 – Standing Heel Raises (medium load)

- Rise up slowly, hold 2 sec, lower slowly.
- 3 sets of 12–15 reps.

Stage 3 – Heavy Slow Resistance

(When pain improves)

- Using added weight (backpack/dumbbell).
- 3–4 sets of 6–8 reps.

Eccentric Training (for persistent symptoms)

- Stand on a step with heels off the edge.
- Lift up using both feet, lower slowly on the affected leg.
- 3 sets of 15 reps.

(Do not do this if insertional tendinopathy at the heel bone is very painful.)

Activity & Return to Sport

- Increase activities gradually — about **10–15% per week**.
- Avoid sudden increases in walking/running volume.
- Return to sport when:
 - Pain is mild and improving
 - Strength on the affected side is similar to the other leg
 - You can hop/jog without sharp pain

Achilles Tendonitis Rehabilitation Exercises



Towel stretch



Standing calf stretch



Standing soleus stretch



Side-lying leg lift



Step-up



Heel raise



Balance and reach exercise A



Balance and reach exercise B

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When to Seek Further Help

Contact your GP / physiotherapist if:

- Pain is worsening despite 6–12 weeks of rehab
- You develop sudden sharp pain or a “pop” (could indicate rupture)
- You cannot walk normally
- There is significant swelling or heat

Expected Recovery Time

- Most people improve within **8–12 weeks** with consistent rehab.
 - Longer-standing symptoms may take **3–6 months**.
Consistency is key.
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Additional Treatments (if needed)

- Physiotherapy-led strengthening programme
- Shockwave therapy
- Orthotics (insoles) for foot alignment
- Ultrasound assessment (if uncertain diagnosis)