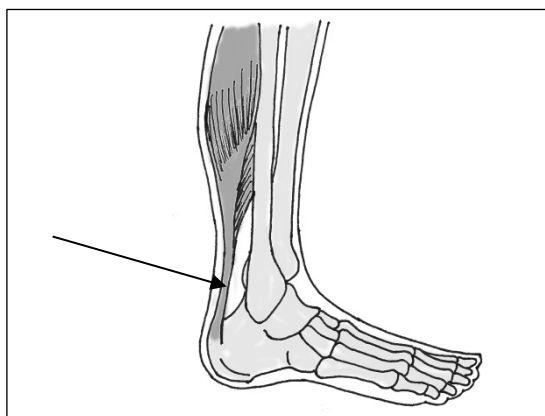


Achilles tendinopathy

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at ndht.pals@nhs.net.

Your Achilles tendon is the largest tendon in your body. It allows you to run, walk, jump and go up and down stairs. Achilles tendinopathy is an injury to your Achilles tendon. It usually happens over a period of time when your tendon has been overused.



Symptoms

The main symptom is pain, usually at the bottom of your calf. You may also have some stiffness. The pain is usually worse first thing in the morning and may interfere with your day-to-day life.

At first you may find that you have pain when you start and finish exercise, but the pain goes away during exercise. Over time, as the injury gets worse, you may also have pain during exercise and it may become constant. You may also have some swelling and your Achilles tendon might feel tender when you touch it.

Causes

The main cause is wear and tear of the tendon over a period of time. As you get older your Achilles tendon becomes less flexible and less able to cope with the stress that walking puts on it. In some cases, very small tears start to develop and if you carry on walking or running, the tears don't heal and the tendon becomes weaker.

Achilles tendinopathy is more likely to develop if you:

- increase how far and how fast you walk or run

- start exercising too quickly after a period of reduced activity
- add stair climbing or walking uphill to your exercise routine
- change the shoes you wear, or wear poor unsupportive footwear
- have weak calf muscles
- roll your feet inwards when you walk/run (overpronation)

Treatment

The symptoms of Achilles tendinopathy can take several months to get better. There are a number of things that may help; the main ones are listed below:

- Reduce the amount of weight bearing exercise you're doing and how often you exercise
- Wear shock absorbing, supportive shoes / trainers
- Consider pain relieving medications and cold therapy
- Use a small heel raise / moulded insole in your shoe
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Exercise in a swimming pool or use a static bike
- Specific exercises may help, see below:

Daily stretches

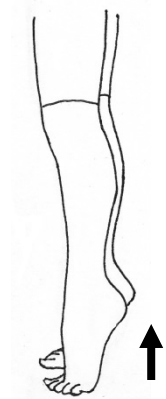
- It is important to 'warm up' your tendon before getting out of bed or after rest, gently flex your foot up and down 10 times.



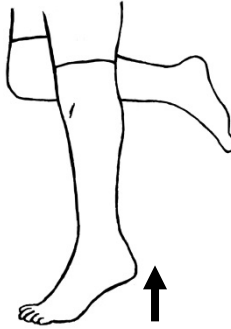
Daily strengthening

Strengthening exercises are based around heel raises.

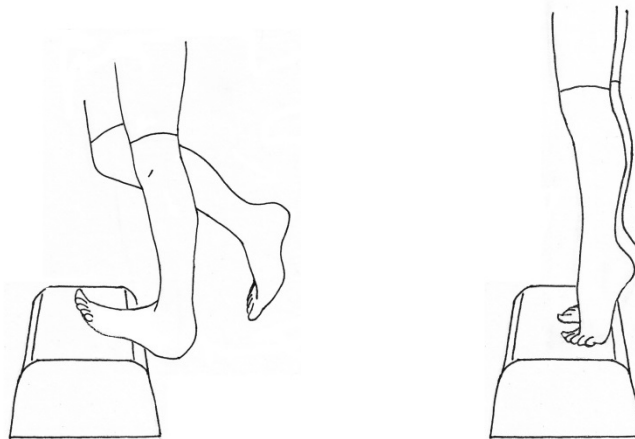
- Start by pushing up onto toes with two feet and then lower yourself down slowly. Repeat 10 times, once a day. Increase the number of repetitions as pain allows.



- This can be progressed to single leg heel raises as pain allows.



- This can be progressed to the edge of a step, initially with both feet, then to one foot.



PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

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