

ACHILLES TENDONITIS

Achilles tendon connects your calf muscle to your calcaneus and basically lifts your heel with every step you take. Disorders of the Achilles tendon are usually an overuse syndrome whereby accumulation of repetitive microscopic damage results in dysfunction. The key in treatment is the reduction of the stress over time.

There are several treatment levels based on the symptoms and pathology present. Again, it is important to be evaluated by a healthcare provider to make sure you are not at a pre-rupture condition which needs aggressive treatment. The basic treatment levels are as follows:

Level One Treatment

Stretching. Stretch your calf muscle 5 to 6 times a day periodically. You almost can't stretch too much. This is accomplished by doing the classic runner's stretch. By stretching the calf muscle you reduce the tension in the calf muscle and thereby reduce the strain in the Achilles tendon. There are countless stretches that are recommended however, we suggest you do the runner's stretch and lots of it.

Wearing heel lifts. By wearing a heel lift you reduce the height the Achilles tendon has to lift the heel. Wearing high heeled shoes can also accomplish this. The high heeled shoe has at least a one-inch differential between the heel and the forefoot. A cowboy boot with a rider's heel works well for men; women have a little more selection to choose from.

Doing an ice massage, nature's anti-inflammatory, on the affected area multiple times a day for 10 minutes each session. Using a cup frozen with water and tearing off Styrofoam at the opening to expose the ice is a great way to accomplish this treatment.

Level Two Treatment

Immobilization coupled with level one treatment. Immobilization is accomplished using a boot with a heel lift. If the pain is bad or persistent enough then we place you in a cast. Immobilization shuts the system down and thereby reduces the strain on the tissues giving them a chance to heal.

Level Three Treatment

Surgical intervention. This occurs when the Achilles tendinitis is non-responsive to conservative management. The type of surgery performed is contingent on the pathology that is present.

Fortunately there is another conservative option that is available. If the initial protocol does not produce the desired results over time, then we have the option of doing the Dolorclast procedure. The Dolorclast is extra corporeal shock wave therapy. It is a non-invasive therapy designed to jump-start the healing process for individuals with chronic Achilles tendinitis.