

Achilles Tendonitis

Achilles tendonitis is inflammation of the Achilles tendon where it attaches to the back of the heel. It is often caused by overuse of the muscle especially when the muscle is excessively tight. This can occur with changes in work load and exercise environment, such as hill climbing or changes in running surface. The inflammation causes pain in the back of the leg near the heel.

What are the symptoms?

Achilles tendonitis feels like an aching, tight, or burning feeling in the tendon attaching to the back of the heel which may produce an occasional sharp pain. Common aggravating activities include running, jumping and going up and down stairs. Often the tendon is tender to the touch, or may feel bumpy or thickened.



You may also notice pain pushing up on your toes or when you stretch the Achilles by pulling your toes back while your knee is straight.

Treatment

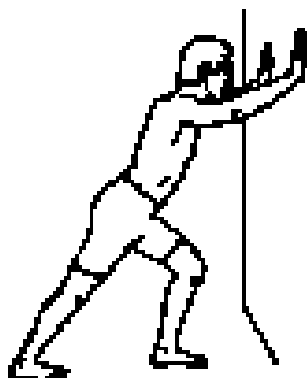
The first step is calming down inflammation. Stop any aggravating activities to allow sore areas to rest. Over the counter anti-inflammatories, taken as directed, as well as ice can help relieve pain and swelling. Icing can be done in a number of different ways:

- Apply a commercial cold pack or frozen bag of vegetables for 20 minutes. Allow 40 minutes before re-icing.
- Freeze water inside a small paper cup and massage the sore areas for 5 minutes.

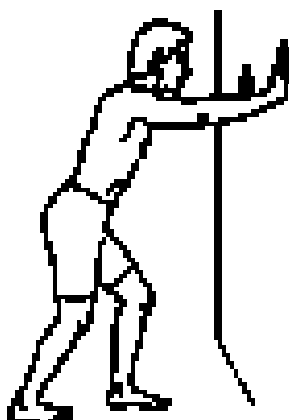
- You can place the lower leg in an ice bath for 20 minutes. Fill a bucket or bath tub with cold water until the area of soreness is submerged.

After settling down the inflammation, specific exercises are important to help relieve pain and allow you to return to pain-free activities.

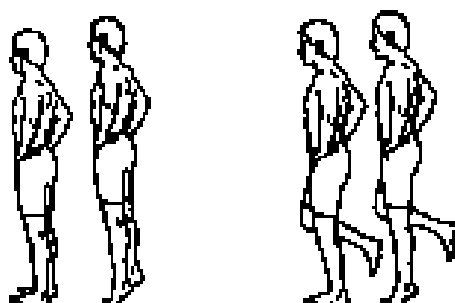
Standing Calf Stretch: Stand with injured foot back, leg straight, forward leg bent. Keeping heel on floor, turned slightly out, lean into wall until stretch is felt in calf. Hold 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times per set. Do 2 sessions per day.



Soleus Stretch: Stand with injured foot back, both knees bent. Keeping heel on floor, turned slightly out, lean into wall until stretch is felt in lower calf. Hold 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times per set. Do 2 sessions per day.



Eccentric Achilles strengthening: Rise onto toes, lift unaffected foot into the air and slowly lower yourself back down with the affected leg. Repeat 10 times. Do 2 sets. Do 1 session a day. You may feel a little soreness but if exercise becomes painful, discontinue.



Bicycling and swimming are good alternatives to running, allowing you stay active without aggravating symptoms. When returning to running, proper footwear is also important.

If your symptoms persist or become more severe, you may need to follow up with an orthopaedic specialist. Call 630-225-BONE to schedule an appointment with a physician from OAD Orthopaedics.

Disclaimer: * This information should NOT be used in place of visit with your healthcare provider, nor should you disregard the advice of your health care provider because of any information you read in this topic.