Achilles Injury

Centre for Chiropractic & Sports Rehabilitation
An integrative, biomechanical approach to the everyday sports and spinal injuries.

Injuries to the Achilles tendon are almost always the result of overuse (tendinitis), and will usually present with some level of pain along the back of the foot and above the heel. In the case of tendinitis, it will be mild but gradual worsen into a chronic, degenerative condition (tendinosis). Usually the Achilles becomes injured due to tightness in the calf: when your calf is dysfunctional, your brain will recruit the Achilles tendon to perform small movements that the calf *should* be performing! As a result, the Achilles becomes loaded and overused, resulting in tendinitis (which leads to tendinosis), or a tear in the tendon.

Treatment at CCSR

Our goal at CCSR is to reduce scar tissue, improve collagen production, and increase mobility/strength in the Achilles tendon and calf. Treatment is performed with a combination of the Graston technique, deep friction massage, active release, low-level laser therapy, stretching, and strengthening. We prefer eccentric (elongating) strengthening (below) to improve the function of your heel and will prescribe a number of strengthening exercises that focus on an eccentric (movement. These exercises are proven to increase mobility and decrease pain when performed on a regular basis.

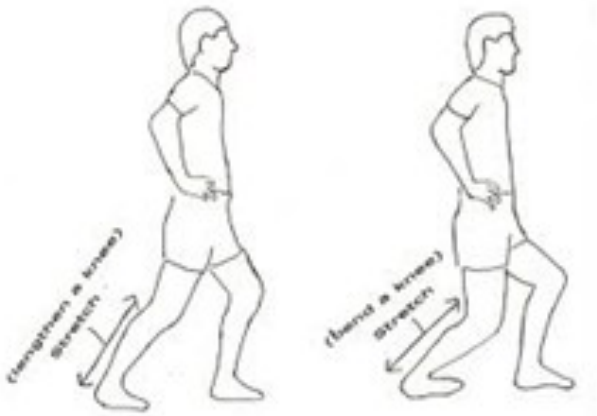

Figure 2: Stretches for Achilles injuries

Treatment at Home

Reducing inflammation is the primary goal of home treatment. When you first notice Achilles pain, *rest it!* Then, ice the area two to three times a day for 15 – 20 minutes, or until numb. Self-massage is vital, too! Spend at least 10 minutes two to three times a week massaging the sore area with a massage tool or with your fingers. The aim of this massage is to break up inflammation and scar tissue, so don't be afraid to apply pressure. We recommend, also, that you perform a series of stretches and strengthening exercises for the Achilles, both of which are pictured to the left. These exercises will address the Achilles tendon injury *and* the leg tightness that caused it.

Figure 3: Eccentric strength training focuses on elongating the tight tissue to improve function and mobility

To stretch the calf and Achilles, begin with your feet together. Take a step forward with the *unaffected* leg, and then slowly lower the knee of your injured leg until you feel a stretch in the calf and Achilles tendon. Repeat this eight times, three times a day.

To strengthen the calf and Achilles, begin with the toes of your injured leg on the edge of a step. Keeping your body straight, slowly lower your heel until you feel a stretch in the calf. Raise back to starting position. Repeat this eight times, three times a day.