

**If you have any concerns about the information given within this booklet please discuss these with your physiotherapist**

**This leaflet is available in large print and other formats and languages.  
Please contact:**

**Physiotherapy  
Department**

# **Achilles Tendinopathy**

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Derriford Hospital  
Derriford Road  
Plymouth  
PL6 8DH  
Tel: 0845 155 8155  
[www.plymouthhospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.plymouthhospitals.nhs.uk)

## What is a Tendon?

This is the strong band like structure which attaches muscles to bone. It is a highly elastic structure.



## What is Tendinopathy?

This is when the tendon becomes degenerative and alters its structure slightly, making it no longer fit for purpose. When the tendon is then used it can no longer take as much strain as it did and becomes irritated and painful.

### **Stage Three**

While remaining on your toes change over on to your bad / sore leg.



### **Stage Four**

Slowly lower yourself down on this leg ONLY.

**Perform 2 sets of 15 repetitions.  
Two times daily**

***This exercise may be uncomfortable but should not be extremely painful.***

Maintain a steady speed throughout the movement. Your Physiotherapist will progress this exercise when you are ready.

Video of this exercise available on youtube.  
Search for plymouthnhsphysio eccentric loading Achilles.

***You will need to continue this exercise for 12 weeks or more for maximum benefit.***

## Eccentric Loading Exercise

With a tendinopathy the tendon structure has changed, therefore it is struggling to work efficiently and in a pain free way. The most efficient way to rearrange this structure is by making the tendon work while the muscle is getting longer i.e. going from toes pointed down to pointing up (eccentrically).

### **Stage One**

Feet flat on the floor / Standing on the edge of a step



### **Stage Two**

Balance on your good leg ONLY (use support if required) and rise up onto your toes

## Risk Factors

- ◆ Tight Muscles
- ◆ Performing constant repetitive movements
  - ◆ Age
  - ◆ Gender (Males are more likely to suffer)
- ◆ Certain Medications (i.e. HRT, some antibiotics or contraceptive Pill)
- ◆ Genetic Predisposition

## Signs and Symptoms

- ◆ Pain on the Tendon
- ◆ Minimal Swelling
- ◆ Pain with initial movement following rest and over activity
- ◆ Lumps on the tendon

## Treatment Options

Your physiotherapist may use a variety of different treatment options. The aim of this booklet is to give you basic information on how you can treat this problem at home.

### Stretches –

Your Achilles tendon is formed by the merging of the two muscles at the back of your calf (Gastrocnemius and Soleus). It is important that these muscles are not tight as this could be putting excess strain on the irritated tendon.

### Gastrocnemius -

- Face a wall and have one foot in front of the other and with your feet facing forwards
- Keep your back leg straight
- Bend your front knee towards the wall



### Soleus -

- Face a wall and have one foot in front of the other with both feet facing forwards
- Bend both knees towards the wall
- Feel the stretch lower down your leg towards the heel



***Each stretch should feel warm but not painful, and held for 30seconds 3 times a day.***

Additional Treatment ideas (discuss these with you individual therapist)

- ♣ Correct Footwear
- ♣ Exercise / Activity Modification
- ♣ Massage and Ice treatment for the area
- ♣ Ankle movement following rest periods
- ♣ Adequate medication use (discuss with your GP / Pharmacist )