

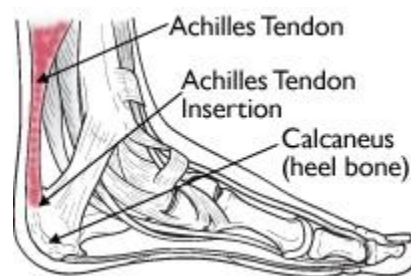
I Hope everyone's feet are doing well after the last newsletter!

Another common problem with foot/ankle is

## Achilles Tendon Injuries

### What is the Achilles Tendon?

Tendons connect muscles to bones. The Achilles tendon is the largest tendon in the body that runs from your calf muscle to the bottom of your heel. It facilitates walking and running by raising the heel off the ground. Tendons have a poor blood supply which causes delayed healing when they are injured.



### Typical Achilles Tendon Injuries:

- **Achilles Tendonitis**  
Is an acute injury of the Achilles tendon resulting in inflammation.
- **Achilles Tendinosis**  
Is when the injury has become chronic due to aging or repetitive trauma causing microscopic tears to the Achilles tendon. This results in degeneration of the collagen in the tendon.
- **Achilles tendon rupture**  
This happens when there is a sudden snapping of the tendon during an activity. It usually occurs in people aged between 30 – 40 because the tendon has become weak from chronic degeneration. It feels like you have been kicked in the back of the heel and there will be severe pain, swelling, bruising and difficulty raising heel off the ground.



## Common Symptoms:

- Pain and stiffness around the Achilles tendon in the mornings
- Pain that worsens with activity
- Tenderness of the tendon especially when squeezed
- Thickening of the tendon
- Visible lumps on the tendon
- Swelling that is always present and that gets worse with activity
- Decreased range of motion of your ankle

## Causes of Achilles Tendon Injuries

1. Increase in physical activity such as mileage or speed
2. Running uphill or on uneven surfaces
3. Changing running shoes
4. Tight calf muscles
5. A Bone spur where the tendon attaches
6. Over-pronation of the foot

## Diagnosis of Achilles Injuries:

1. X-Rays will reveal calcification of the Achilles tendon either at the insertion or at the middle of the tendon. It may also show a bony spur underneath the tendon.



## What can you do?

- ✓ **Treat it early!** If you have had pain and swelling in your Achilles tendon for a few weeks, recovery can take about 3 months. However, if you had the pain and swelling for several months, it can take 6 months before you see any improvement with treatment.
- ✓ **REST!** Reduce the amount of activity you are doing and switch to low-impact and cross training activities such as cycling and swimming.
- ✓ **ICE!** Ice the tendon for 10mins at a time throughout the day.
- ✓ **Non-steroidal anti-inflammatories** may help reduce the pain and inflammation.

- ✓ A **stretching and an exercise** program designed by a physiotherapist can help relieve stiffness and pain as well as preventing a recurrence.
- ✓ **Orthotics** such as a slight heel raise or to prevent over-pronation of the foot
  
- ✓ If there is still no relief, then you may need to see your doctor for a cortisone injection or referral to a specialist for surgical release of the Achilles tendon.

## PHYSIOTHERAPY

### ❖ STRETCHES

#### 1. Calf Stretch

##### a. Upper calf



##### b. Lower calf



#### 2. Warm-up

- a. Move ankle up and down 30 reps.
- b. Walk backwards with toe/heel pattern for 3mins.

### ❖ STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

- 1. Heel Drop – with your foot at the edge of a step, slowly raise and lower your heel to the lowest possible point



2. Wall knee squat - stand facing close to a wall, feet shoulder width apart. Bend knees so that they lightly touch the wall. Return to the start. 10 reps.

3. Eccentric Training – 3 x 15 reps a day or more



Stand on the edge of a step with your toes and the ball of your foot on the step and your heels hanging off the step



Then go up onto your toes using both feet



Lift one foot off the step



Lower down on your other foot. And repeat.

As well as doing this with a straight leg, do it with your knee slightly bent, and with your leg bent change the angle of your foot, so you do some facing straight forward, and some with your foot pointing left and then right, so you get a different angle.

**If you have any questions regarding this newsletter please do not hesitate to contact me!**

Don't forget to like my profile on Facebook 😊

<https://www.facebook.com/sianphysio>

