

What is it?

Achilles tendinopathy is pain affecting the Achilles tendon resulting in degeneration of the tendon. The Achilles tendon is the largest tendon in the body and it attaches the main muscles of the calf (gastrocnemius and soleus) to the heel bone.

Although the Achilles tendon can withstand great stresses from walking and running, it is also prone to tendinitis, a condition associated with overuse and degeneration.

Symptoms usually include pain in the Achilles tendon, which is often worse after rest or with excessive activity. There can be local swelling when in an acute phase or nodules and thickening when in a chronic phase.

Common Causes?

- Sudden increase in the amount or intensity of exercise activity
- Incorrect footwear
- tight calf muscle
- Limited range of movement in the ankle joint
- Over pronation

Treatment

Achilles tendonitis responds well if appropriate treatment is initiated early. If symptoms are ignored, then the condition will become chronic resulting in tearing or rupture;

- Reduce the loading forces on the tendon with the use of heel lifts, orthotics and change in footwear
- Increase the strength of the tendon so it can adapt to high loading forces
- Stretching exercises
- Strengthening exercises
- Ice
- Rest
- Shockwave therapy to kickstart the healing process

Orthotics

Orthotics should be worn for 80% of the time you are on your feet. For most people this means work (or school) and during exercise. The example to the right, shows a picture of a pronated foot with bowing of the achilles next to a straight foot with an orthotic offloading the achilles.



For further information on your foot health or to discuss treatment options with a podiatrist, please contact your local ModPod Podiatry clinic.