

Achilles Tendonitis

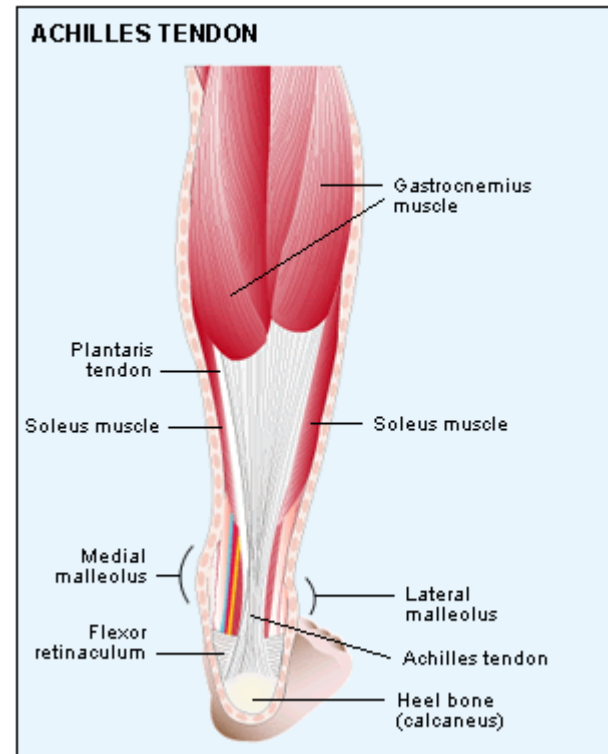
The Achilles tendon is the largest tendon in the body. It attaches the calf muscles to the heel bone, calcaneus, and is very important because it lets you lift your heel when you start to walk. It also helps you to run or stand on tiptoe.

Achilles tendonitis is a condition where there is irritation and inflammation of the Achilles tendon. As people age, tendons, like other tissues in the body, become less flexible and more rigid, and thus more susceptible to injury. Therefore, middle-age recreational athletes commonly get Achilles tendonitis.

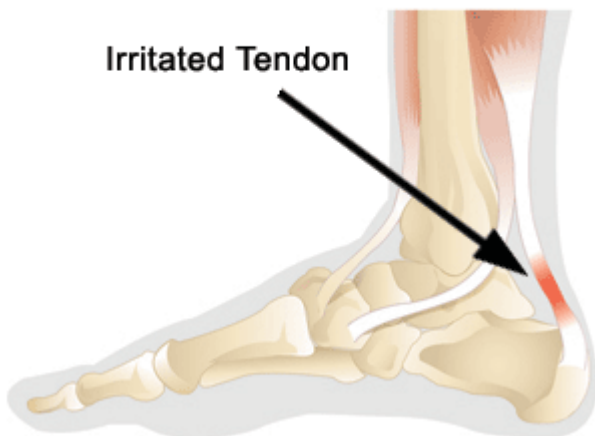
What causes Achilles Tendonitis?

Common causes are:

- new or unsuitable footwear
- pressure from shoes at the back on the tendon
- sudden and too fast an increase in exercise
- sports that involve jumping
- tight calf muscles
- flat feet



Achilles Tendinosis/Tendinitis



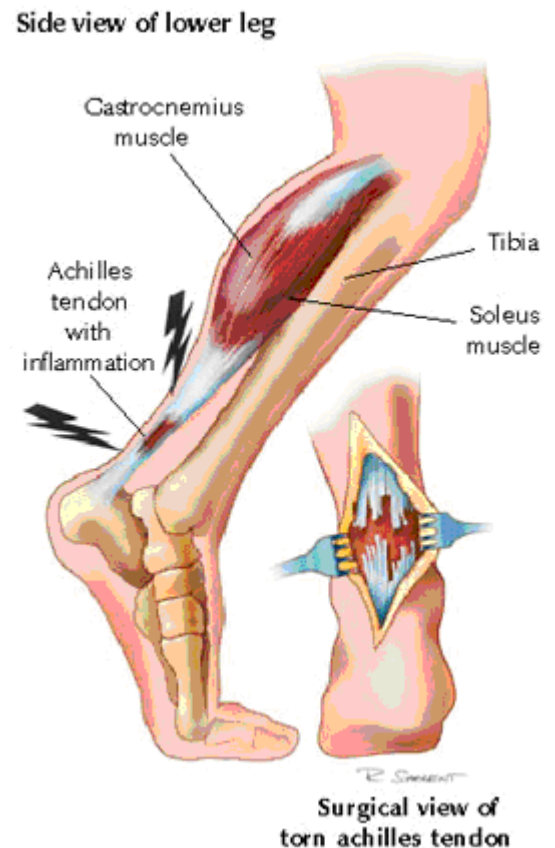
Usual symptoms of Achilles Tendonitis

- Pain in the tendon 2-5 cm above the calcaneus; nodules may be palpable
- Crepitation or creaking of the tendon as you move the ankle up and down
- Posterior heel pain
- Pain after periods of inactivity
- Pain after first walking in the morning
- Pain with activities such as running or jumping

Chronic irritation of the Achilles tendon can lead to small tears within the tendon, which makes it susceptible to further injury and causes a build-up of scar tissue within the tendon.

Once the inflammation has started, even standing will put a significant internal pressure on the tendon.

This constant internal pressure limits the circulation to the tissue and results in less available oxygen. Biochemical changes as a result of decreased oxygen lead to the formation of adhesions within the Achilles tendon. These in turn cause more restrictions, inflammation and swelling.



What can Physiotherapy do to help?

- We use acupuncture or electrotherapy to relieve pain and decrease inflammation.
- We give exercises to stretch tight structures, e.g. calf muscles.
- We develop a personalized exercise program to address any muscle imbalances.
- We prescribe orthotics if foot pronation is a contributing factor or a heel wedge to put in your shoes to minimize the stress on the Achilles tendon.
- We advise you on your return to activity and how to maintain fitness.

Sport Medicine Physician

Your sports medicine physician can help diagnose Achilles tendonitis.

If you are not improving with physiotherapy, your sport medicine physician can prescribe anti-inflammatory medications if they think these would be appropriate.

Another option for the treatment of Achilles tendonitis is non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS). Make an appointment with a **sport medicine physician** to discuss when this would be appropriate.