

Achilles Tendonitis

Explanation of Diagnosis

Achilles tendonitis is **inflammation of the Achilles tendon**, which connects the **calf muscles (gastrocnemius and soleus) to the heel bone (calcaneus)**. It is typically caused by **overuse, repetitive stress, or a sudden increase in activity**. Symptoms include **heel pain, stiffness (especially in the morning), swelling, and tenderness along the back of the ankle**. If untreated, it can lead to **chronic pain or an Achilles tendon tear (rupture)**.

Specific Work Modifications

- **Avoid prolonged standing, walking, or climbing stairs.**
- **Use cushioned, supportive shoes** or orthotic inserts to reduce tendon strain.
- **Modify tasks** by alternating between sitting and standing.
- **Take frequent breaks** to stretch and rest the foot.
- **Avoid walking barefoot or in unsupportive footwear** (e.g., flip-flops or high heels).

Specific Activity Modifications

- **Avoid running, jumping, or high-impact activities** (e.g., basketball, tennis, hiking on uneven terrain).
- **Modify workouts** by replacing running with **cycling, swimming, or elliptical training**.
- **Use proper warm-up and stretching routines** before exercise.
- **Gradually return** to activities with lower intensity and proper footwear.

Recommended Supplements

- **Collagen peptides (10 g daily)** - Supports tendon repair.
- **Vitamin C (500 mg daily)** - Aids collagen synthesis.
- **Magnesium (300-400 mg daily)** - Helps muscle relaxation and recovery.
- **Turmeric (500 mg twice daily)** - Natural anti-inflammatory.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids (1000 mg daily)** - Reduces tendon inflammation.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration

Diet Recommendations:

- **Anti-inflammatory foods:** Fatty fish (salmon, sardines), berries, nuts, turmeric, and leafy greens.

- **Collagen-boosting foods:** Bone broth, citrus fruits, and bell peppers.
- **Protein-rich foods:** Chicken, eggs, lentils, and dairy to support tendon healing.
- **Limit processed foods and excess sugar,** which can worsen inflammation.

Hydration Tips:

- **Drink at least 2-3 liters of water daily** to maintain tendon hydration.
- **Limit caffeine and alcohol,** which can slow healing.

Home Exercise Prescription

Perform **2-3 times daily** to reduce pain and improve flexibility:

1. **Eccentric Heel Drops** (Once pain allows)
 - Stand on a step with your heels hanging off the edge.
 - Slowly lower your heels below step level over **3-5 seconds**, then raise back up.
 - **10 reps, 2-3 times daily.**
2. **Calf Stretch (Straight & Bent Knee)**
 - Stand facing a wall, place hands on the wall, and step one foot back.
 - Keep the **back leg straight** for the gastrocnemius stretch.
 - Slightly **bend the back knee** for the soleus stretch.
 - Hold **20-30 seconds, repeat 3 times each leg.**
3. **Toe Towel Scrunches**
 - Place a towel on the floor and use your toes to scrunch it toward you.
 - **10 reps, 2 times daily.**
4. **Ankle Mobility Exercise**
 - Rotate the ankle in **circular motions** (clockwise and counterclockwise).
 - **10 reps each direction, 2 times daily.**
5. **Foam Rolling the Calf**
 - Use a foam roller under the calf muscle and gently roll back and forth.
 - **1-2 minutes per leg, 1-2 times daily.**

Avoid high-impact or heavy-resistance exercises until pain resolves.

Helpful Books

1. "The Running Athlete's Guide to Achilles Tendon Health" - Nicholas Romansky, DPM
2. "Rebuilding Milo: The Lifter's Guide to Fixing Common Injuries and Building a Strong Foundation" - Aaron Horschig

Click here for more orthopedic patient information.

Contact a Key West orthopedic clinic or reach out to Dr. Jason Pirozzolo.

Always consult your physician prior to taking any supplements or medications.