

Achilles Tendon Injuries

Achilles tendon injuries affect the strong cord that joins your calf muscles to your heel. Pain may build gradually with repeated activity, or a sudden injury may partly or completely tear the tendon. These problems need different care.

When to seek prompt care

A sudden pop, a feeling of being kicked behind the ankle, or new trouble pushing off the foot can signal a rupture, which means a tear. Stop sport and get prompt medical assessment. Do not test the injury with repeated heel raises or begin a stretching program before it is assessed.

What an evaluation involves

Your clinician will ask how the pain started and check the tendon, calf strength, and ankle movement. Ultrasound or an MRI may help when the diagnosis or extent of a tear is unclear.

Activity and recovery

For overuse pain, treatment may include changes to painful activities, suitable footwear, and a guided strengthening program. The location of the tendon problem matters when choosing exercises. A tear may need a boot and rehabilitation, surgery, or another specialist plan.

Ask when you may walk, work, drive, and return to sport. Follow the plan for your injury rather than using another person's exercise schedule.

Related reading

- Haglund's Deformity
- Ankle Sprains

Sources and further information

- AAOS: Achilles tendinitis
- AAOS: Achilles tendon rupture

This handout provides general education. Your treating clinician can explain how it applies to your injury.