

Achilles Tendinopathy

Advice and treatment

The Achilles tendon is the large tendon at the back of your ankle. It connects the calf muscles to the heel and is a common area to develop a tendon related problem.

A tendinopathy is when a tendon becomes painful, which can also lead to some weakness.

The following advice and exercises may help you manage your Achilles pain.

If you have further pain, please contact your GP for further information.



Signs and symptoms

If you do have Achilles tendinopathy, you may experience pain and stiffness up the back of the ankle, especially in the morning.

Activities and health conditions which place stress on the Achilles tendon can cause these symptoms to begin and become worse, such as:

- A change in activity, particularly a sudden increase in intensity or difficulty
- Weakness of the muscles in the calf
- Health conditions such as obesity, high cholesterol and diabetes

Achilles tendinopathy can take some months to settle down.

If your symptoms are severe or not improving seek advice from your GP or Physiotherapist

You can find out more about Achilles injuries – including causes, symptoms and treatment suggestions – from the NHS website

Visit NHS website [nhs.uk/conditions/tendonitis/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/tendonitis/)

Treating Achilles Tendinopathy

What you can do

The recovery of an Achilles tendinopathy can take some time but the following can help manage your pain and increase your strength:

- **Reduce the load and stress on your Achilles** – Rest or reduce activities
- **Shoe wear** – Add heel inserts in shoes to help in the early stages
- **Applying ice to the pain** – Wrap a bag of frozen peas in a damp towel for example, for 4-5 minutes at a time to help reduce swelling
- **Anti-inflammatory medication** – This can help, but please speak to your GP or pharmacist for advice
- **Avoid stretching** – In the early stages, as this can cause further irritation
- **Gradually return to activity** – To help prevent an increase in symptoms

Exercises

The following exercises may help increase your strength and manage the pain.

Don't do them all in the early stages of your symptoms, and take a break if you feel further pain.

Stage 1

These exercises should be performed if your tendon is very painful and is limiting your ability to do day to day activities such as walking.

Isometric mid-range heel raise

Stand with both feet on the floor holding onto a support.

Gently push up onto your tiptoes and hold for 10 seconds.

Do not push up as high as you can but hold yourself in the mid position and your full range

Repeat 10 times, three times a day.

To progress, add weight to a backpack.

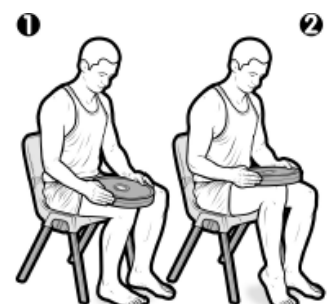


Seated bent knee heel raises

Sit with knees bent to 90 degrees, slowly push up onto your tip toes and return to the floor.

Ensure to place extra weight on top of the knee on the affected side, for example heavy books or bags of sand to increase difficulty.

Repeat 10 times, three times a day.



Stage 2

These exercises should be carried out if exercises in Stage 1 are no longer challenging.

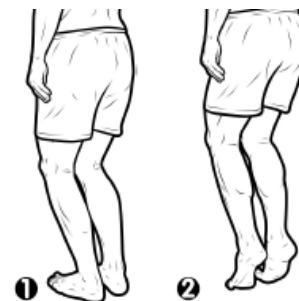
Double heel raises

Repeat exercise 1 without holding at the midpoint.

Work up as high as is comfortable and then gently return your heel down to the floor.

Repeat this 10-15 times, two to three times a day. If this is painful, please go back to Stage 1.

These can also be performed with the knees bent to 30 degrees.



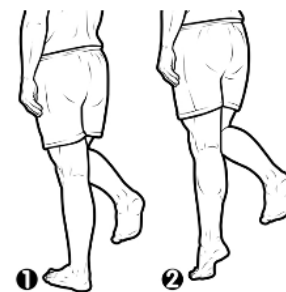
Single heel raises

Stand on one foot holding onto support as needed.

Slowly push up onto your tiptoes. One repetition should aim to take 4-6 seconds.

Repeat this 10-15 times, two to three times a day. If this is painful, please go back to [Stage 1](#).

These can also be performed with the knees bent to 30 degrees.



The exercise diagrams have been created by The Rehab Lab.

Visit Rehab Lab website TheRehabLab.com/

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