Sussex MSK Partnership
Central

NHS

Achilles Heel/Tendinopathy

Achilles Tendon

Achilles Tendon Insertion

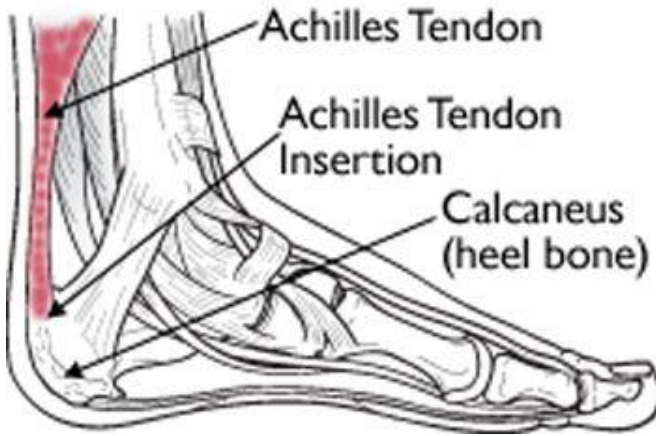Calcaneus (heel bone)

Achilles tendinopathy is a condition that may present as pain, swelling, and stiffness of the tendon and around the back of the heel. The pain can be worse when you first wake-up and aggravated with increased walking and running.

What Causes It?

It is thought to relate to 'tiny injuries' (known as microtraumas) to the Achilles tendon. Over time these injuries can cause changes in the tendon. Severe pain and limited movement may be a sign that you need to see your therapist for assessment.

Non-Surgical (Conservative) Management

- Using supportive footwear with a fastening.
- Modify activity; reduce intensity to improve your symptoms.
- Rehabilitation; including exercises to strengthen your muscular strength .
- Cold pack for 20 minutes using skin protection.
- Pain medication including non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen.
- Strapping or shoe insoles as necessary.
- High volume saline injections.

What Exercises Can I Do?

The following exercises may help to relieve symptoms. But you are likely to have to address multiple areas of muscle weaknesses. These should not increase your pain. If they do, stop. Perform each exercise gently and slowly, only moving as far as feels comfortable. If you have used ice, allow 30 minutes before exercising.
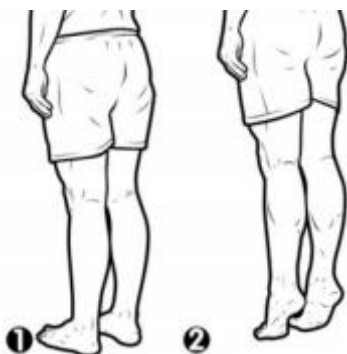
Double-Leg Calf Raises

Standing, slowly raise up onto your toes to where you are comfortable.

REPEAT: 3 x 12-16
FREQUENCY: 1 x day

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Static Wall Pushes

Push your toes into the wall.
Hold x 6 seconds and relax.

REPEAT x 5
FREQUENCY: 4 x a day

Exercise Illustrations: © TheRehabLab

Surgery

Surgery may be considered if the Achilles continues to be painful and is not responding to non-surgical measures. There are a number of surgical options and the choice of procedure will depend upon the severity of the problem. This can be discussed with your therapist.

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