

# Achilles Tendinopathy

## Body Part

Achilles Tendon is formed of the gastrocnemius, soleus (& plantaris in most people – this muscle is absent in 10% of the population) join and insert onto the calcaneus (heel bone)

## Condition:

Achilles tendinopathy is a condition that causes pain, swelling and stiffness of the Achilles tendon. It is thought to be caused by repeated tiny injuries (known as microtrauma) to the Achilles tendon. After each injury, the tendon does not heal completely, as should normally happen. This means that over time, damage to the Achilles tendon builds up and Achilles tendinopathy can develop.

Achilles tendinopathy can be described as insertional or mid portion, the difference is in the localisation. The insertional form is situated at the closer to the calcaneus (heel bone), the midportion form is located at the middle the tendon body.

## Summary:

Achilles Tendinopathy is more common in men than women, and most prevalent in the 30's-40's age bracket.

Common risk factors are:

- Inadequate footwear
- Increased training frequency / demands
  - Especially from running, jumping or any propulsive activity
- Returning to training after a period of inactivity
- Calf weakness
- Limitations in joint range of motion
- Increased BMI
- Excessive pronation

## Symptoms:

Categories of Achilles Tendinopathy:

Mid Portion:

- Pain over mid tendon
- Often appears swollen with lump development

Insertional:

- Pain over back of heel
- Can have swollen appearance / 'lump' over base of Achilles (similar to Haglund's Deformity presentation)

Both categories show:

- Gradual onset of morning pain and stiffness, which usually resolves after 5 – 10 minutes (worst the morning after doing exercise)
- Stiffness over Achilles region when getting up after sitting
- Can ache at night when highly aggravated
- Aggravating Factors: running, jumping, any propulsive activity

Treatment:

Exercise load management is vital to the successful treatment of an Achilles tendinopathy. Mild load increases will stimulate new tendon growth. Overload leads to tendinopathy deterioration..

- Pain relief / reduce swelling
- Soft Tissue Massage to calf muscle
- Dry Needling
- Heel lifts
- Taping of foot to help alignment
- Anti-inflammatories such as Ibuprofen can be beneficial at certain stages of your injury, but it would be best to consult with a Physio, E.P., or Podiatrist at GenHealth first.
- Modify stress on tendon which could mean altering your training habits to avoid the aggravating factors.
- If tolerable changing the load on the tendon with exercises such as heel raises is most effective to tendon rehabilitation.

Prognosis:

Depending on the severity of the condition it could take weeks or even months to recover from Achilles tendinopathy. The sooner you're diagnosed and start your treatment at Gen Health, the quicker you'll get better. In most people, the pain and movement get better after around 12 weeks.



Source: <http://www.foothealth4kids.com.au/conditions/heel-pain-in-kids/insertional-achilles-tendinopathy/>

### Further information:

For further information, please contact our friendly team at Gen Health.

Picture Link: <https://www.fixpodiatry.com.au/podiatry-conditions/achilles-tendinopathy/>