

TRICEPS TENDINOPATHY AND STRAIN

What is triceps tendinopathy and strain?

Tendons are strong bands of connective tissue that attach muscle to bone. When a tendon is acutely injured it is called a strain. Tendonitis is when a tendon is inflamed. When there are micro-tears in a tendon from repeated injury it is called tendinosis. The term tendinopathy refers to both inflammation and micro-tears.

Your triceps muscle, which acts to straighten your arm, is attached to the bony bump at the back of your elbow by a large tendon. Triceps tendinopathy causes pain in the back part of the upper arm near the point of your elbow.

How does it occur?

Triceps tendinopathy occurs from overuse of the upper arm and elbow, especially in activities like throwing and hammering. It may also be caused by a direct blow to the triceps muscle or tendon. A triceps strain can occur with a forceful straightening of your arm or elbow.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms may include:

- pain when you straighten your elbow or fully bend your elbow
- tenderness at the triceps muscle and tendon
- swelling near the point of the elbow

How is it diagnosed?

Your healthcare provider will review your history and examine your arm and elbow. If your provider thinks there may be a chip off the bone at the point of your elbow, he or she may order an X-ray.

How is it treated?

Use ice packs on the painful area for 20 to 30 minutes 3 to 4 times a day until the pain goes away. You can also do ice massage: Freeze water in a cup and tear back the top of the cup. Rub the injured area with the ice for 5 to 10 minutes, 3 times a day. Be careful when icing your elbow. An important nerve runs just under the skin and can be damaged if you ice more than is recommended.

Your healthcare provider may recommend an anti-inflammatory medicine such as ibuprofen (adults aged 65 years and older should not take non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicine for more than 7 days without their healthcare provider's approval).

You may be given a strap to wear around the lower part of your triceps during activities that cause discomfort.

Your healthcare provider will give you rehabilitation exercises to help in your recovery.

When can I return to my sport or activity?

The goal of rehabilitation is to return you to your sport or activity as soon as is safely possible. If you return too soon you may worsen your injury, which could lead to permanent damage. Everyone recovers from injury at a different rate. Return to your activity will be determined by how soon your arm recovers, not by how many days or weeks it has been since your injury occurred. In general, the longer you have symptoms before you start treatment, the longer it will take to get better.

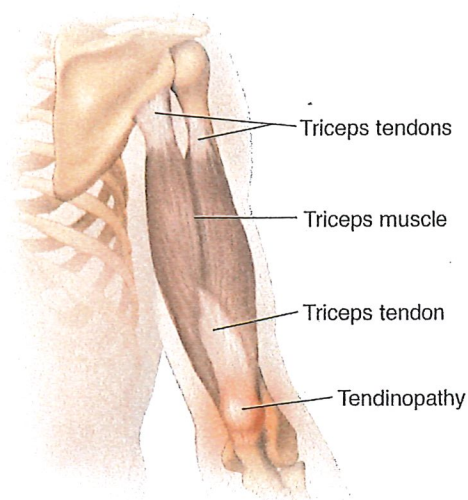
You may return to your sport or activity when:

- you no longer have tenderness or swelling at your triceps muscle or tendon
- you have regained strength in your injured arm so that it is similar to the strength of your uninjured arm
- you have full range of motion in your injured arm compared to your uninjured arm

How is triceps tendinopathy and strain prevented?

The best way to prevent triceps tendinopathy is to avoid overuse and forceful movements of your upper arm and elbow. It is important to recognize early symptoms so you do not make your injury worse by overactivity.

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TRICEPS TENDINOPATHY REHABILITATION EXERCISES

You may do all of these exercises right away.

1. FRENCH STRETCH: Stand with your fingers clasped together and your hands high above your head. Stretch by reaching down behind your head and trying to touch your upper back while keeping your hands clasped. Keep your elbows as close to your ears as possible. Hold this position for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat 3 to 6 times.



FRENCH STRETCH



TRICEPS TOWEL STRETCH

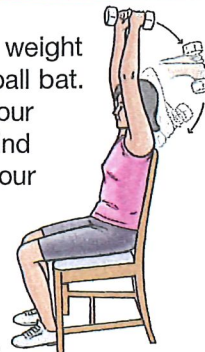
2. TRICEPS TOWEL STRETCH: Stand with one arm over your head holding the end of a towel. Put your other arm behind your back and grab the towel. Stretch your top arm behind your head by pulling the towel down toward the floor with hand of your bottom arm. Keep the elbow of your top arm as close to your ear as possible. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat 3 to 6 times.

3. TOWEL RESISTANCE EXERCISE: Stand with one arm over your head holding the end of a towel. Put your other arm behind your back and grab the towel. Lift the top hand toward the ceiling while creating resistance by pulling down on the towel with your other hand. Keep the elbow of your top arm as close to your ear as possible. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 10 times.



TOWEL RESISTANCE EXERCISE

4. FRENCH PRESS: Sit grasping a small weight with both hands as if it were a baseball bat. Reach toward the ceiling. Bending your elbows, slowly lower the weight behind your head until the weight touches your upper back. Lift the weight up over your head and reach toward the ceiling again. Repeat 10 to 20 times.



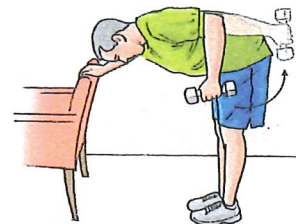
FRENCH PRESS

5. MODIFIED PUSH-UP: Get onto your hands and knees, with your hands directly underneath your shoulders. Slowly lower yourself toward the floor, being careful to keep your spine straight. When you can do 2 sets of 15 easily, do this with your heels in the air. Gradually progress to doing this with your legs out straight.



MODIFIED PUSH-UP

6. TRICEPS KICK BACK: Lean forward with the hand of one arm resting on a table or chair for support. Hold a weight in the hand of your other arm. Keep the elbow of that arm against your side. Your arm should be bent at a 90-degree angle with your upper arm parallel to the floor. Move the forearm of your arm backward until it is straight. Repeat 10 to 20 times.



TRICEPS KICK BACK

ELBOW/ARM