

Achilles Tendon Rehab Exercises



Scan this QR Code to access a detailed video that enhances the information in this handout. It includes step by step guidance and visual demonstrations for each exercise.

What is achilles tendinopathy?

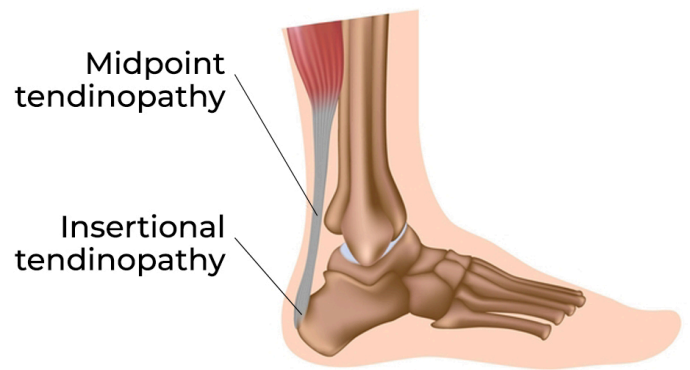
Achilles tendinopathy is a condition marked by pain and impaired function in the Achilles tendon, which connects the calf muscles to the heel bone. It commonly develops due to repetitive stress and overuse, especially from activities like running, jumping, or sudden changes in direction. The tendon undergoes inflammation or degeneration, causing pain at the back of the ankle and difficulty with activities such as walking, running, or climbing stairs.

How is it treated?

Treatment for Achilles tendinopathy focuses on reducing pain and restoring tendon function through activity modification, physical therapy, and targeted strengthening—especially eccentric loading exercises. Additional supportive measures often include heel lifts and orthotics to reduce tendon strain during daily activities. In more persistent or severe cases, advanced treatments like shockwave therapy, platelet-rich plasma (PRP) injections, or ultrasound-guided percutaneous tenotomy may be recommended. While pain relief options such as heat, NSAIDs, and stretching can help temporarily, the main goal is gradual, progressive rehabilitation of the tendon.

How long is the recovery?

Recovery time depends on the severity of the condition and the adherence to treatment protocols. Mild cases may improve in a few weeks, while chronic tendinopathy can take several months to heal. Consistent physical therapy and avoiding activities that aggravate symptoms are critical for full recovery.



Achilles Tendon Rehabilitation Exercises

Consistent rehabilitation can accelerate recovery and prevent recurrence. Do the following rehabilitation program 2-3 times per week. Most people will need to follow this at least 2-3 months to allow the achilles tendon to remodel and strengthen. To maximize tendon strength, gradually increase the challenge as you progress. You can add weight every 1 to 2 weeks or increase the sets to 3. This principle of progressive overload is essential for continued improvement and tendon resilience.

Active Warm Up

- Point foot down (plantarflexion) and then up (dorsiflexion) - 20 times
- Rotate ankle clockwise - 10 times
- Rotate ankle counterclockwise - 10 times

Standing Calf Stretch

- Objective: gently stretch the Achilles tendon and calf muscles
- Stand facing a wall with your hands placed on it at shoulder height. Step one foot back, keeping the heel flat on the ground and the knee straight. Lean forward slightly until you feel a stretch in your calf and Achilles tendon.
- Hold for 30 seconds, then repeat one more time.



Standing Soleus Stretch

- Objective: gently stretch the soleus muscle and Achilles tendon
- Stand facing a wall with your hands resting on it. Step one foot back and bend both knees slightly, keeping the back heel flat on the ground. Lean forward until you feel a stretch in the lower calf (soleus) and Achilles tendon.
- Hold for 30 seconds, then repeat one more time.



Isometric Bodyweight Heel Raise

- Objective: strengthen the calf muscles and Achilles tendon
- Stand with your feet hip-width apart, near a wall or sturdy surface for balance if needed. Rise onto your toes and hold the position at the top without moving for 10 seconds. Lower back down slowly, rest for 2 to 3 seconds, then repeat.
- Continue this cycle for a total of 1 minute.



Bodyweight Heel Raise

- Objective: strengthen the calf muscles and Achilles tendon
- Stand with your feet hip-width apart, using a wall or sturdy surface for balance if needed. Slowly lift your heels off the ground, rising onto your tiptoes. Pause briefly at the top, then lower your heels back down with control.
- Perform 3 sets of 10 repetitions.



Slant Board Heel Raise

- Objective: increase calf and Achilles tendon strength with an added stretch
- Stand on a slant board with your heels lower than your toes, using a wall or sturdy surface for balance if needed. If you don't have a slant board, you can use a sturdy step or curb to achieve a similar stretch by standing with your heels hanging off the edge.
- Slowly raise your heels as high as possible, then lower them back down below the level of your toes to feel a gentle stretch.
- Perform 3 sets of 10 repetitions.



Eccentric Heel Drop

- Objective: strengthen and lengthen the Achilles tendon to promote healing
- Stand on the edge of a step or curb with the balls of your feet supported and your heels hanging off. Use both feet to rise up onto your tiptoes, then shift your weight to the affected leg and slowly lower your heel down below the step level. Use your other foot to help return to the starting position.
- Perform 3 sets of 10 repetitions.

