

## Achilles Tendonitis

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### What is it?

Achilles tendonitis is inflammation of the Achilles tendon, often an overuse injury. Micro-tears to the tendon can result from repetitive stress to the area. Rapid increase in activity level, improper warm-up, altered running terrain, inappropriate footwear, biomechanical factors and generalized overuse may increase one's risk of developing this condition.

### How does it present?

Achilles tendonitis presents as pain or stiffness in the lower calf or heel. Pain is worse with activity, especially running and jumping. Swelling and tenderness to touch may also be present. Achilles tendonitis may develop over weeks to months or be of short-onset.

### How do we evaluate it?

Evaluation of Achilles tendonitis is based on history and physical exam. Exam may reveal poor calf flexibility, tenderness and/or swelling over the Achilles tendon, and decreased calf strength. Occasionally further investigations may be necessary to rule out other associated conditions.

### Treatment?

Treatment of Achilles tendonitis includes relative rest, with modification of activity initially. Ice and NSAIDS (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication) may help control pain symptoms. Heel lifts can effectively shorten the tendon and may reduce stress or stretch to the tendon with activity. Rehabilitation, through physical therapy modalities and therapeutic exercises involving calf stretching and strengthening, may take weeks to months to resolve. Treatment is essential as this may become chronic or, with repeated trauma and decreased strength of the tendon, predispose to tendon rupture.