

## Achilles Tendonopathy

The Achilles tendon can frequently become painful in runners. This may be due to inappropriate footwear, overdoing training, weakness or abnormal biomechanics around the foot and ankle. If untreated, this problem may lead to degenerative changes to the tendon and reduce its force producing capacity. This will lead to further injury and ultimately loss of performance.

Achilles tendonopathy is characterised by pain just above or at the insertion on the heel bone, particularly first thing in the morning it can be exquisitely painful! It may often ease as you run and then be more painful afterwards. There are several structures in the Achilles area that can be the source of pain, we will identify which and advise if you need to rest it.

If necessary we would use 'hands on skills' to release any of the structures around your calf, ankle, foot and Achilles that may be responsible for creating the problem. We may use acupuncture to release tight muscles and reduce pain. We will teach you exercises to stretch and strengthen the Achilles particularly heel raising exercises which can help strengthen the tendon and allow it to adapt to load again. We will also teach you exercise drills to enhance your foot and ankle function and strengthen your calf muscles. We will usually kinesio-tape the foot and lower leg to enhance function and support the Achilles and calf muscles and also provide you with a weights programme, aimed at strengthening the calf and Achilles.

If there are any structural problems in your foot we may refer you to a podiatrist for further analysis, it may be that you will require the use of orthotics to settle the problem. It can take up to three months to recover from an Achilles tendon injury even with physiotherapy.

### Contact Athlete Matters

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