



# achillies rupture

Rupture, or tearing, of the Achilles tendon is a common condition. This typically occurs in the unconditioned individual who sustains the rupture while playing sports, or perhaps, from tripping. There is a vigorous contraction of the muscle and the tendon tears. The patient will often describe the sensation that someone or something has hit the back of the calf muscle. Pain is suddenly present, and although it is possible to walk, it is usually painful. More importantly, the leg is weak. It is particularly noticeable when trying to push off while walking, and there isn't sufficient strength to do so.

## how it is treated

Surgical correction of the ruptured tendon is almost always necessary. This is performed in order to regain the maximum strength of the Achilles, as well as the normal pushing off strength of the foot. The strength of the muscle depends on the correct tension between the muscle and the tendon. The only way that the correct tension on the tendon can set is by accurately repairing the tendon ends.

## recovery

Following the tendon repair no walking on the foot is permitted for ten days. Then walking is begun in a removable boot. The rehab process is critical in the recovery after tendon rupture, and without a carefully monitored program, full recovery is never possible. You can expect to be out of competition for 6 to 9 months post surgery. Recovery increases to 12 months if you only have the Achilles immobilised instead of operated on. There is a greater risk of re-injury if you do not have the surgery.

## prevention

You can help prevent an Achilles tendon injury by gently stretching your Achilles tendon and calf muscles before and after taking part in physical activity. Perform stretching exercises slowly, stretching to the point at which you feel a noticeable pull, but not pain. Don't bounce during a stretch, and avoid stretching with a completely straight leg.

To further reduce your chance of developing Achilles tendon problems, you could follow the recommendations below:

- Avoid activities that place excessive stress on your heel cords, such as hill-running and jumping activities (especially if done consistently).
- If you notice pain during exercise, rest.
- If one exercise or activity causes you persistent pain, try another.
- Alternate high-impact sports, such as running, with low-impact sports, such as walking, biking or swimming.
- Strengthening your calf muscles also can help prevent injury to your Achilles tendon.

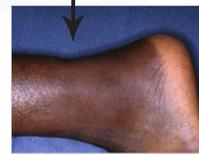
To strengthen your calf muscles, you could practice toe raises:

- Stand flat, then rise up on your toes.
- Hold the elevated position momentarily before slowly dropping back down to a stand. Emphasizing the slow return to the ground will help improve the force-absorbing capability of your calf muscle and Achilles tendon.
- Start with raising just your body weight. Later, you can add hand weights as you do this exercise or raise your body weight on just one foot.

To avoid a recurrence of an Achilles tendon injury, you might follow these guidelines:

- Use warm-up and cool-down exercises and calf-strengthening exercises.
- Apply ice to your Achilles tendon after exercise.

Notice the 'dint' in the achillies where the rupture has occurred



stretch the calf muscle and achillies using a step and a slightly bent knee



move the stretch down your leg by further bending your knee



apply ICE to your achillies after exercise