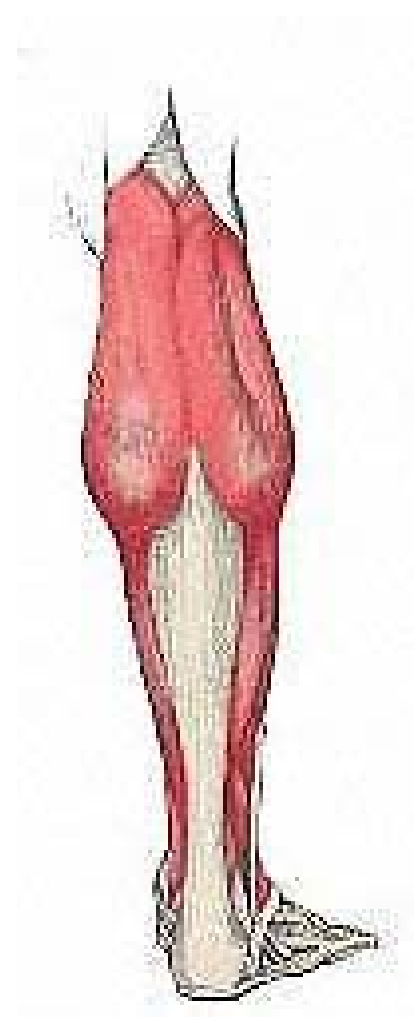


# Rehabilitation of Achilles Tendinitis

## Phase 1 - immediately you have the injury.

- Identify what has caused the achilles tendinitis e.g., overpronation, overuse, overweight, running on hard surfaces, high heels, running up hills etc.
- Ice- apply for 20 minutes at least three times a day.
- Rest - use crutches if needed. A good taping method is available which supports the tendon.
- Anti-inflammatory medication can be taken (under Doctors advice of course).
- Maintain fitness by non weight bearing exercise such as cycling if pain allows. There is still a strain on the tendon when cycling and swimming so if your injury is bad rest only.



## Phase 2 - this phase can start anywhere from two days to two weeks after initial injury. If it is painful to walk on then continue with phase 1.

- Apply ice - again 20 minutes at least three times a day.
- Very gentle stretching. a) Face a wall, put the leg to be stretched back a couple of feet and bend the front leg keeping the back leg straight and the back heel on the floor. **Hold for 30 to 45 seconds and release. Repeat**

**3 to 5 times, 3 times a day/** b) Face wall, put the toes of the foot to be stretched a couple of inches up the wall keeping the heel on the ground, bend the knee towards the wall. You should feel a stretch lower down in the leg.

- Put a heel lift of about 1cm into both your shoes to help take the stress off the tendon.
- A sports injury specialist can apply ultrasound therapy.
- Begin to walk more and exercise by swimming or cycling. Gentle jogging on a hard surface can also be introduced. A good routine to follow is apply ice for 20 minutes, then ultrasound, then jogging, then ice again.
- You should start a strengthening programme. It is important that you strengthen the tendon in the stretched position. Stand on the edge of a step with your heels over the edge. Raise yourself up and down on your toes gently ensuring your heels go below the level of your toes. Start off with three sets of 10 and gradually increase day by day making sure you do not over-do it. If it is painful or sore afterwards then rest for a day and reduce the workload.

### **Phase 3 - this phase can begin when you can comfortably run without pain.**

- Gradually increase the duration of your runs. No more than 10 % per week is usually recommended. If your sport demands sprinting then gradually increase the speed.
- Continue with the stretching and strengthening programmes. It is important to do these even if you do not gain pain at this stage. Continue for at least three months.
- Continue to ice the tendon after training.
- You should now be ready to start back in full training but never neglect stretching and strengthening of the achilles tendon or the injury might return.