

achilles tendinopathy

tips for best management

1. Decide what stage your patient's tendon pain is at: reactive tendinopathy or degenerative tendinosis

Reactive tendinopathy occurs early in the onset of achilles tendon pain usually as a result of a sudden increase in activity above the usual levels. This injury responds best to adjustments in technique of the aggravating activity & rest.

Degenerative tendinosis occurs with chronic tendon loading & requires a gradual eccentric strengthening program over 12 weeks for complete collagen repair.

2. Is your patient an insertional or mid-tendon Achilles tendinopathy?

- insertional tendinopathies respond negatively to stretching; and strengthening for insertional tendinosis needs to be restricted to lowering to the ground with shoes on (not off a step)
- mid tendon tendinosis can benefit from stretching to reduce muscle tension & requires full range strengthening (off a step) for degenerative reversal.

3. Has your patient completed the full eccentric strengthening program?

An eccentric strengthening program for mid-tendon tendinosis needs to be progressed to:

- straight knee eccentric phase strengthening off a step x 15 reps x 3 sets x 2/day &
- bent knee eccentric phase strengthening off a step x 15 reps x 3 sets x 2/day

both of these exercises should then be progressed with the addition of weights & the program needs to be maintained over 3 months for complete collagen adaptation to occur.

4. NSAIDs can be helpful with a reactive tendinopathy, but detrimental for degenerative tendinosis

NSAIDs have been shown to inhibit expression of aggrecan (key ground substance proteins responsible for tendon swelling) which can be positive in a reactive tendinopathy.

They also have been shown to slow collagen synthesis, so if you have a degenerative tendinosis this could counteract your efforts in an eccentric strengthening program leading to failure in the repair process.



we have a good supply of walking boots with excellent stability & comfort for immediate fracture management or conditions requiring immobilisation.

we also treat the whole body & pride ourselves on staying updated with current evidence based practice

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physiotherapy





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