

Achilles Tendonitis

Injuries to the Achilles tendon are often caused by

- Suddenly increasing physical activity without proper training, stretching or preparation.
- Changing from high heels to flats. High heels cause the Achilles tendon and calf muscles to remain in a shortened position. When switching to flats, the Achilles tendon needs to stretch more. Tendonitis may occur due to the inability of the Achilles and/or calf muscles to adapt from one shoe to the other.
- Runners who increase their mileage too rapidly.
- Runners who try hill training without the proper strengthening exercises
- Poor footwear
- Weak, tight, or unstable calf muscles. The calf muscles are attached to the heel via the Achilles tendon. If these muscles are tight for long periods of time, excessive stress and irritation is caused to the Achilles.
- Over pronation of the foot.



These repetitive stresses cause small tears in the surrounding soft tissues as well as friction and inflammation in the area of the Achilles tendon. Scar tissue is laid down in an attempt to stabilize the area. This may chronically shorten the muscles putting further irritation to the Achilles tendon. Additionally it may prevent the surrounding muscles from gliding on each other.

When the initial scar tissue is laid down, the

soft tissue becomes weaker and tighter; consequently, more scar tissue gets laid down. This is the start of the cumulative injury cycle making the soft tissue weaker and weaker.

Blood supply to the Achilles tendon is limited resulting in poor healing. Chronic Achilles tendonitis may lead to a complete rupture.

Conventional treatments may be ineffective and increase the amount of damage to the Achilles tendon.

- Cross fiber massage often irritates this area
- Steroid injections should be avoided whenever possible. Research has shown that more than three or four steroid injections in a year can weaken tendons, damage joints, and can cause weight gain, diabetes, osteoporosis, and ulcers.

Active Release addresses the release of restrictions within the affected soft tissue structures.

Other soft tissue structures that may be involved indirectly in Achilles tendonitis include:

- Popliteus
- Hamstring
- Tibialis Posterior
- Plantaris
- Tibialis Anterior
- Muscles that assist in plantar flexion of the foot