

## EXERCISE SHEET FOR ACHILLES TENDON INJURIES

As with all injuries Achilles tendinopathy requires immediate attention, if you do not act quickly then the injury could get worse. If the pain is so intense that you cannot walk then you should seek medical attention. You should palpate your injury in order to determine if you have any holes in the tissue. If you find any lumps at the top end of the calf or at the bottom of the Achilles you should seek medical attention. If the injury is moderate then you can use the following instruction;

**R** – Rest from all activities that cause pain – running, impact cardio and jumping should be avoided.

**I** – Ice the painful area for about 8 minutes at a time, the skin colour should go pink as opposed to red. This should be repeated for 3 to 4 days 3 times a day. Make sure you use a j-cloth over your ice to avoid freezer burn.

**Anti-inflammatory drugs** – Either use topically for example – Voltarol Gel – Oral ibuprofen may be used provided you don't have any contraindication. A lot of people visit the GP for stronger NSAIDs.

**Shoes** – Wear shoes that have good support for the arch of the foot, it is also helpful to have a slight heel raise.

**Stretch** – to reduce the tension on the tendon. Warm up then hold the stretches for about 20 seconds, repeat 6 reps twice a day.



### Phase 1 - Gastrocnemius Stretch

Stand with your hands touching the wall. Make sure that both feet face the wall. The side to be stretched is furthest from the wall, the leg must be kept straight and the heel is pushed towards the ground. The front leg is bent and a few inches from the wall. Hold for 20 seconds.



### Soleus Stretch

This stretch is performed against a wall, the knee is bent to focus on the soleus.



### Phase 2 - Gastrocnemius Stretch

This stretch is stronger than the previous two, the degree of dorsi flexion is increased and then the hips are pushed towards the wall.

 <p>www.thep2go.com</p>	<p><b>Phase 3 - Gastrocnemius Stretch</b></p> <p>Sit as shown in the picture, use a towel or a therband to hook around the ball of the foot. Then gently pull the foot towards you into dorsi flexion.</p>
	<p><b>Phase 4 - Gastrocnemius Stretch</b></p> <p>This is a powerful stretch and should be used with caution. The participant gets into the press up position as shown, the bum is then raised into the air, one foot is placed over the other and the heel is pressed towards the floor.</p>
<p><b>STRENGTHENING</b></p> <p>It is important to strengthen the calf muscle and the Achilles tendon after the sub-acute phase. The tissue will have started to heal, but the tissue is still weak and in a mesh like structure. The aim is to strengthen the tissue and for the mesh structure to return a linear structure. The exercises should not hurt and 3 sets of 10 reps should be completed once a day.</p>	
	<p><b>Two Footed Standing Calf Raise</b></p> <p>With your two feet together slowly rise up on your toes, hold in the top position for 3 seconds then slowly lower down.</p>
	<p><b>Theraband Calf Exercise</b></p> <p>Sitting as shown with the theraband around the ball of the foot, slowly point your toe. Then over 10 seconds return the foot back to the neutral position and repeat.</p>



### **Soleus Heel Raise**

Sit on a bench with your feet on a small box as shown. Use a weight or dumbbell that is consistent with your ability. Rest the weight on your knees; support it with your hands. Lift the weight by pointing your toes, and then slowly lower the heels down as far as you can go. Repeat.



### **Phase 1 - Eccentric Calf Raises**

This exercise is designed to target your Achilles tendon itself. Research suggests that eccentric loading is the gold standard exercise for Achilles tendinopathy.

Standing on a small box, raise slowly up on your toes. Then over 10 seconds lower your heel down. Repeat.



### **Phase 2 – Eccentric Calf Raises**

This exercise is for the final stages of rehab, caution must be used! Start with both feet hanging off the back of the box. The toes are then pointed to full range of movement. One foot is then taken off the box and the heel is slowly lowered to the ground. Both feet are then returned to the box and the toes are pointed again. This process can be used to target the soleus by performing the whole movement with bent knees.