

Achilles Tendinopathy

What is it?

The Achilles is the thickest tendon in the body, connecting your calf muscles to your heel. When it is overworked (often from a sudden increase in running or walking), the tendon structure changes, becoming thickened and sensitive. It famously feels stiff in the morning or at the start of a walk, "warms up" and feels better, then hurts again afterwards.

Patient Advice:

- **Heel Lifts:** Wear shoes with a slightly higher heel (like running shoes) or put a gel heel lift in your shoe to offload the tendon. Avoid flat thongs or sandals.
- **Monitor the "Warm Up":** Just because pain goes away during the run/walk doesn't mean it's fine. If pain is worse the next morning (morning stiffness), you did too much.
- **Don't Stretch:** Stretching a painful Achilles often irritates it further. Focus on strengthening instead.

Early Management Exercises:

- **Isometric Hold (Double Leg):** Stand on flat ground, rise up onto toes, and hold still for 30-45 seconds. Rest and repeat 3 times. (Great for pain relief).



- Seated Calf Raise: Sit on a chair, feet flat. Push toes into ground to lift heels up and down.



- Single Leg Balance: Stand on the affected leg (flat foot) to improve tendon stability without heavy load.

