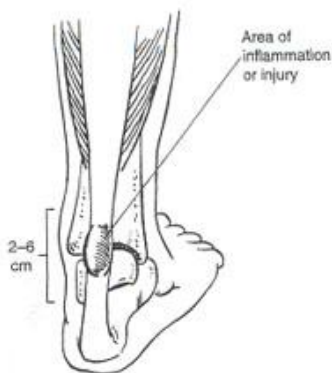


Achilles Tendonitis

What is Achilles Tendonitis?

The Achilles tendon is the thick tendon above the heel that attaches the calf muscles to the heel bone. Activities such as walking, running or jumping places stress on the tendon which can lead to over use, inflammation and small tears. This is called Achilles Tendonitis. Symptoms can include: pain, weakness, stiffness and tenderness to the touch. Over time the tendon may become thickened causing constant or recurring pain and stiffness. The following tips will help you treat your symptoms.



What can I do in the early stage?

Rest: Rest gives the tendon time to heal and repair itself. It is important to limit painful activities.

Ice: Ice massage can be done for 4-6 minutes, 3-4 times per day. After freezing water in a paper cup, peel off some of the paper so a chunk of ice is showing and rub the ice on the sides of the tendon.

An **ice pack** can be used for 10 min, 3-4 times per day

Heel lifts: Use a heel lift in both shoes during the rest period. This will help decrease some of the stress on the tendon and allow it to calm down quicker. Stop if this causes pain.

Calf muscle stretching: Stretching should be done **pain free**. The stretch should be felt in the back of the calf.

Calf muscle strengthening: Exercises will help the healing process by improving the strength of the tendon and help align scar tissue.

What can I do to return to activity?

- Gradually return to training, start back at 50% of your previous level if you can perform the activity without pain. Do not increase your activity or training more than 20% each week. (example: if you are able to jog 10 minutes and want to progress, only add 2 minutes to the total that week) Warm up for 5-10 minutes prior to your activity.
- Vary your activity, try adding a stationary bike or swimming workout into your schedule.
- Include rest days in between exercise days so that you are not training every day in the beginning.
- Begin training on softer surfaces such as grass, dirt and asphalt. Avoid harder surfaces such as concrete.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Wear activity specific shoes and replace old and worn shoes.
- Continue to stretch and build strength in your calf muscles.

Stretching exercises

Calf stretch: A pulling sensation in the tendon is normal, avoid feeling pain during stretching. repeat 5-6 times per day Hold each stretch for 30 – 60 seconds.



Knee straight: Place the leg you are stretching behind you. Keep your heel on the ground, knee straight and your toes pointed straight ahead. Lean forward until you feel a gentle stretch in your calf.



Knee bent: Place the leg you are stretching behind you. Start slightly closer to the wall. Keep your heel on the ground. Bend your back knee until you feel the stretch in the lower part of your calf.

Calf strengthening exercises - Phase I

Sitting heel raises

a. Sit on a chair and rise up onto your toes as high as you can without pain. Lower your heels slowly. Complete 20-25 reps without pain. Perform this 5-6 times per day

b. You can add resistance by pressing down on your thigh with your hands, or by placing a weight on your thighs, complete 20-25 reps without pain



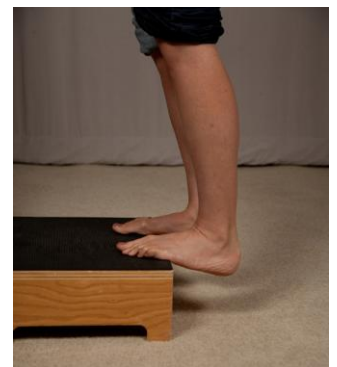
Calf strengthening exercises – Phase II

Standing Heel Raises: Use both feet to rise up onto your toes and lower the heels slowly. Assist with the unaffected side so that there is no pain in the affected side. The affected side may do most of the work at this stage. Complete 20-25 reps without pain.



Progress by:

- Increasing the weight on the affected side and decreasing the weight on the unaffected side. The goal is 20-25 reps without pain.
- Do the heel raises while only using the affected leg. The goal is 20-25 reps without pain.
- Place your toes on the edge of a step. Use two feet at first and follow the same progression. Allow your heels to slowly drop below the step as you complete 20-25 reps.
- Do the exercise on one leg, continuing to move slowly.



Consult with your physical therapist or doctor if you experience an increase in your symptoms with recommended exercises, or if you develop new symptoms of numbness, tingling, or a spread of the pain. This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor. If you have questions or need more information about your medication, please speak to your pharmacist. Kaiser Permanente does not endorse the medications or products mentioned. Any trade names listed are for easy identification only.