

**Specific question:**

In adults with Achilles tendinopathy, is an exercise and load management education programme more effective than usual care in reducing pain and improving function?

**Clinical bottom line**



There is no research that answers this specific question.

**Why is this important?**

Achilles tendinopathy (AT) is a common cause of overuse injury in both athletes and non-active individuals, especially at older ages and in the general population, 2.16 per 1000 patients experience AT every year (Albers 2016). Management of this condition is variable ranging from stretches and passive treatment to a progressive tendon-loading programme. Clinicians want to use evidence-based practice to guide treatment and optimise resources. Recent research shows that a tendon loading program with education for the management of other tendinopathies has good outcomes for patients (Mellor et al 2018) and we wanted to explore if there was any evidence to show if this combined approach is beneficial for AT.

**Search timeframe: 2016-2021**

**Inclusion criteria**

	Description	Search terms
<b>Population and Setting</b>	Adults with Achilles tendinopathy	Adult, over age 18, Achilles tendinopathy, pain, insertion or mid-portion Achilles tendon, degenerative, chronic lower limb tendonitis, tendinosis, calf pain
<b>Intervention or Exposure</b>	Tendon loading programme	Tendon loading programme, exercise regime by physiotherapist which includes tendon loading, isometric, concentric,

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Getting Evidence into Clinical Practice:  
Musculoskeletal Research Facilitation Group (CAT Group)  
22/07/2022

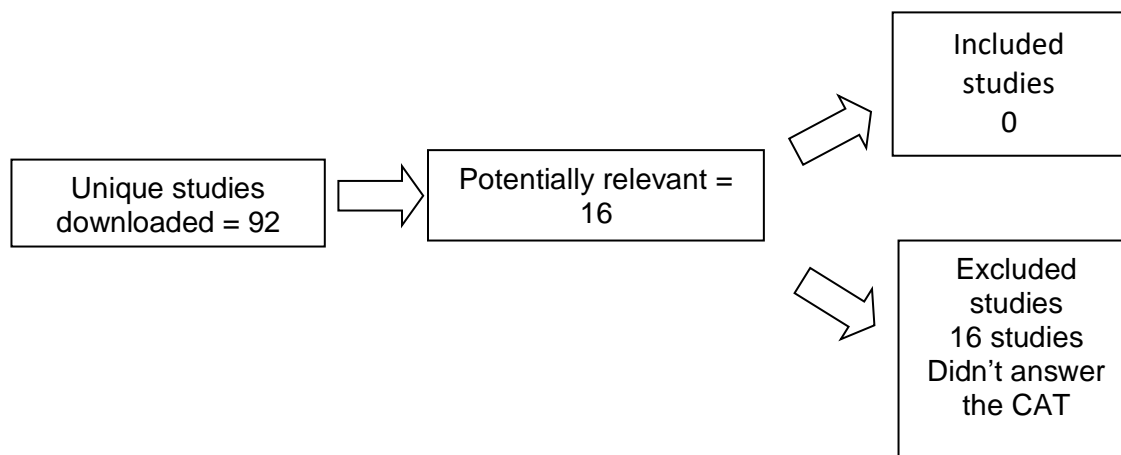
		eccentric exercises, loading, progressive tendon loading, graded loaded program
<b>Comparison, if any</b>	Usual care	Usual care, stretches, insoles, orthotics, strengthening, advice, friction massage, electrotherapy, ultrasound, acupuncture, dry needling
<b>Outcomes of interest</b>	Reduced pain, improved function	Improve function, reduce pain, return to work, return to sport, QoL
<b>Types of studies</b>	RCTs and systematic reviews	Randomised controlled trials, meta-analysis and systematic reviews

**Routine databases searched**

Clinical Knowledge Summaries, PEDro, BMJ Updates, Clinical Evidence, TRIP, Database, NICE, HTA, Bandolier, The Cochrane Library, Medline, Cinahl, Embase, PsycInfo, Professional websites. Joanna Briggs Institute, Web of science, Sports discuss and PubMed

**Date of searches- 2016 - 2021**

**Results of the search**



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## Summary

There is no evidence that examines whether an exercise and load management education programme is more effective than usual care in management of AT.

## Implications for practice/research

There appears to be a gap in the research which examines the evidence of applying a tendon loaded exercise programme along side patient education, which informs the patient about the condition, how to manage it and the principles of the treatment approach. Further research is necessary to understand if educating patients in the pathology and the principles of the treatment approach (progressive tendon loading) improves outcomes of reducing pain and improving function.

	Good quality evidence to support use....	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Insufficient or poor quality evidence OR substantial harms suggest intervention used with caution after discussion with patient...	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No good quality evidence,	<input type="checkbox"/> √

## What would you tweet? (140 characters)

There appears to be a lack of research that examines the importance of patient education on exercise and tendon load management for Achilles tendinopathy. Improving patients understanding may improve patient's outcomes and their use of NHS resources.

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## References

Albers IS, Zwerver J, Diercks RL, et al. Incidence and prevalence of lower extremity tendinopathy in a Dutch general practice population: a cross sectional study. *BMC Musculoskelet Disord.* 2016;17(1):16

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