

# Information to help you manage pain and swelling of your tendon

(Tendinopathy)



## What is a tendon?

Tendons are a part of your body that help you to move. They are made up of strong tissue. When you walk, run and move your body, the tendons work with your muscles and bones to make this happen. You can feel one of your tendons at the back of your ankle; this is your Achilles tendon.

## What is tendinopathy?

Sometimes when tendons are overworked they can become sore, swollen and painful. This is what we call 'tendinopathy.'

## Can it be made worse?

Complete rest or overuse can make the pain, swelling and soreness of your tendon feel worse. Generally, staying completely still won't help you to get better. Getting the balance between some rest and some activity is important.

## What can I do to help myself?

### Keep moving



Your tendons need to move and remain strong to keep them healthy. It is important to keep up your normal activities such as walking, cycling etc. These activities will help to keep your tendons strong and keep you active.

### Stay healthy



A healthy diet will help you to maintain a healthy weight. Not smoking and getting a good night's sleep will help to keep your tendons healthy.

### Follow advice



Many people with tendinopathy will start to get better within 8 weeks of following exercises and advice, guided by a physiotherapist. Maintaining your ideal weight is important for the health of your tendons. Should you need support to manage your weight go to [www.nhs.uk/better-health/lose-weight](http://www.nhs.uk/better-health/lose-weight)

### Be aware



Other medical conditions such as diabetes, raised cholesterol, underactive thyroid and the menopause may affect how quickly things settle. Tendinopathy tends to take a little longer to settle as you get older.

## Do I need an injection or surgery?

Very few people benefit from injections or surgery. Most people improve with exercises and following general advice. There can be risks associated with having injections and surgery which you can discuss with your physiotherapist.

## Will it come back?

There is a possibility that your tendon problem will return. Keeping your tendons healthy and strong by keeping active, eating and sleeping well, not smoking or drinking too much alcohol and maintaining a healthy weight will all help reduce the chance of it returning. If it does return you may find putting a cold compress on the area helpful and speaking to your pharmacist about the best products to help relieve the pain. Then returning to the advice and exercises given to you by your physiotherapist.

Thank you for reading this leaflet, written by physiotherapists and patients.

## How long will it last?

Tendon pain, swelling and soreness can last from weeks to several months. During that time most people will feel an improvement but there will be a minority who may not, in which case your physiotherapist can advise you.



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