

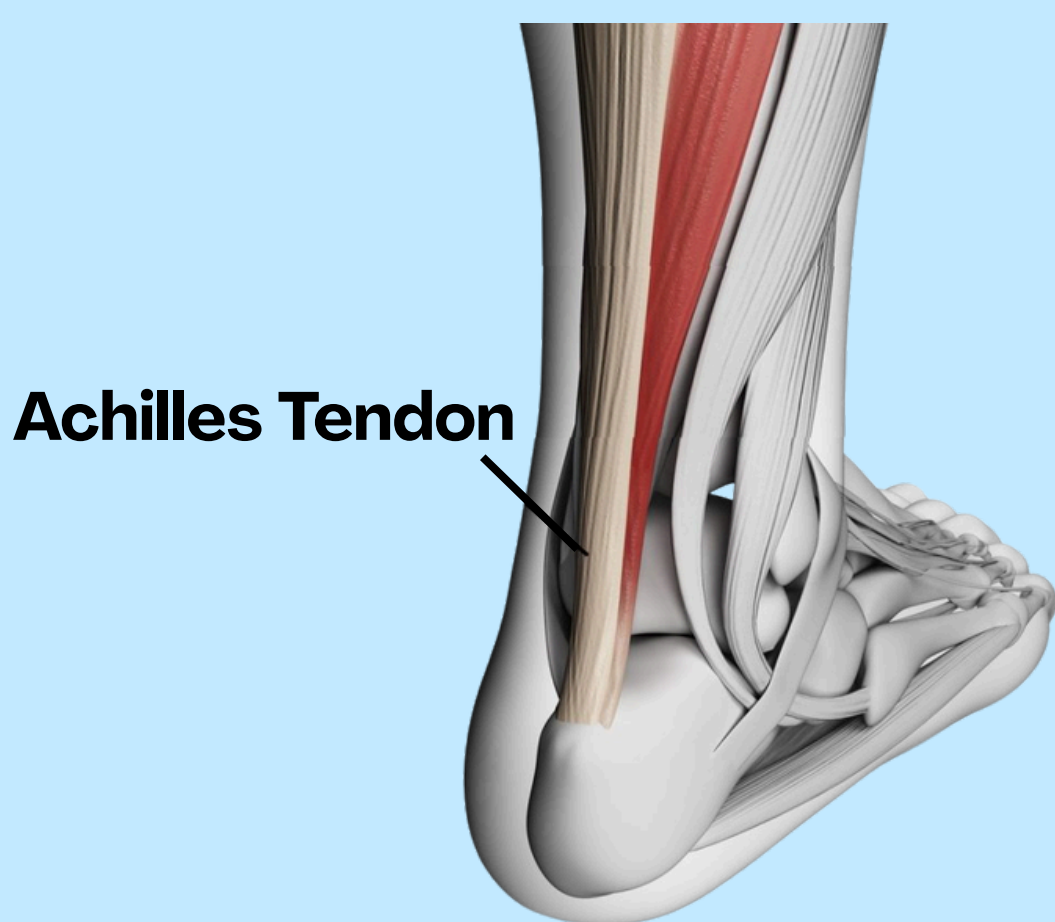
# Achilles Tendinopathy

## Why Your Achilles Is Sore and What You Can Do About It

If you have ever felt pain or stiffness at the back of your heel, especially when walking, running, or getting out of bed in the morning, your Achilles tendon might be the culprit.

Achilles tendinopathy is one of the most common injuries affecting runners, athletes, and even people who simply walk a lot for work. The good news is that with the right approach, most people recover well and return to the activities they enjoy.

Let's break down what is actually happening and what you can do about it.



### What Is an Achilles Tendon?

The Achilles tendon is the thick band of tissue that connects your calf muscles to your heel bone. It is the largest and strongest tendon in the body and plays a huge role in everyday movements like:

- Walking
- Running
- Jumping
- Going up stairs
- Pushing off your toes

Every time you take a step, the Achilles acts like a spring, storing and releasing energy to help propel you forward.

Because it works so hard, it is also prone to irritation when the load placed on it becomes too much.

### What is Achilles Tendinopathy?

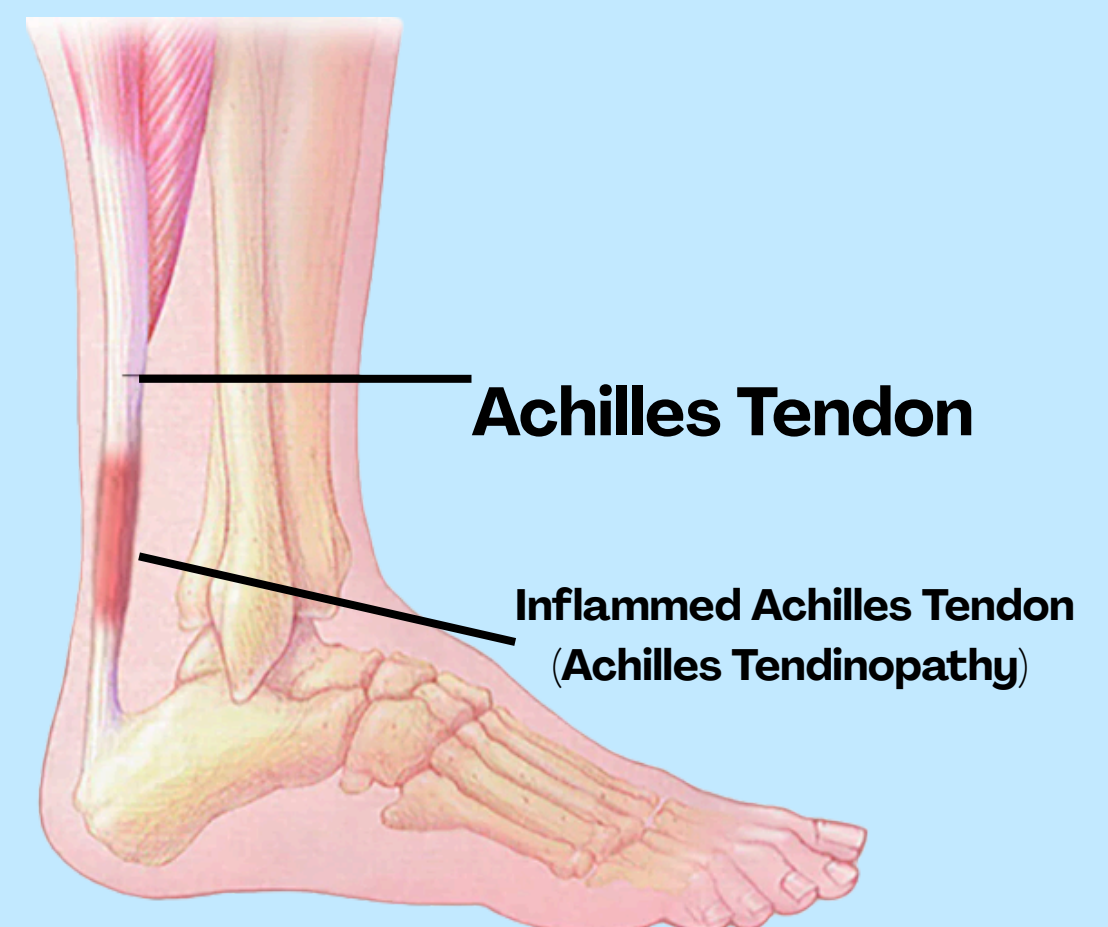
Achilles tendinopathy refers to pain and dysfunction in the Achilles tendon caused by overload over time.

It is not usually a sudden injury. Instead, it tends to develop gradually when the tendon is asked to do more than it is prepared for.

This can happen when:

- You suddenly increase running or training volume
- You start a new exercise program
- Your workload changes (for example lots of walking or standing)
- You return to activity too quickly after time off

Over time the tendon becomes irritated, thickened and painful.



### Common symptoms

People with Achilles tendinopathy often notice:

- Pain or stiffness at the back of the heel
- Morning stiffness when first getting out of bed
- Pain that warms up during activity but returns afterwards
- Tenderness when you squeeze the tendon
- Swelling or thickening of the tendon

Sometimes the pain sits mid-tendon (a few centimetres above the heel), while other times it occurs right where the tendon attaches to the heel bone.

# The Big Myth: “Just rest it”

Many people think the solution is to completely rest the tendon.

Unfortunately, tendons do not respond well to prolonged rest.

Instead, they need gradual and progressive loading to recover and regain strength.

Think of it like rebuilding the tendon’s tolerance to activity.



## What actually helps recovery?

Evidence consistently shows that specific strengthening exercises are one of the most effective treatments.

These exercises help the tendon:

- regain strength
- tolerate load again
- reduce pain over time
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One of the most commonly prescribed exercises is the heel raise.

## When should you seek help?

It is worth getting assessed if:

- pain has lasted more than 2–3 weeks
- the tendon feels thickened or swollen
- pain is worsening with activity
- you are struggling to run, walk or train

Early treatment can prevent the problem from becoming long-term.



**Although Achilles tendinopathy can be frustrating, most people improve with the right combination of load management and strengthening.**

**Tendons are remarkably adaptable and with the correct rehabilitation they can become stronger and more resilient than before.**