

How Can Achilles Tendonitis Be Prevented

Injuries to Achilles tendon are quite common and mainly found in sportsmen or women associated with running sports. The sports that have most chances of inflicting Achilles injuries are football, basketball, tennis, cycling, running and walking. This injury is caused by twisting or turning of the ankle or foot beyond known range of movement. It is normally a rupture or strain of the Achilles tendon.

The Achilles tendon facilitates you to point the foot downwards, allowing you to run, jump or stand on your toes. Despite being the strongest tendon in the human body (it can withstand a 1000 pound force), the Achilles tendon is ruptured most often due to the pressures put upon it in competitive sports. Achilles tendon is afflicted by two kinds of injuries - Achilles Tendon Rupture and Achilles Tendonitis.

Achilles Tendon Rupture is a tear (or complete shearing) of the Achilles tendon, and occurs due to a sudden or unexpected force.

Achilles Tendonitis, on the other hand is a simple inflammation of the Achilles tendon, and is caused by excessive wear and tear of the Achilles tendon caused by excessive training over long periods of time.

Cause: Achilles Tendonitis is caused by lack of conditioning in most cases. In the event that the tendon and the muscles connecting to it are not conditioned, it will result in a weakness of the tendon making it prone to injuries.

It is important to remember that, while conditioning one should remember not to put too much strain on the tendon in a short period of time. This will degenerate the tendon over time and would lead to inflammation and pain.

Lack of warming up and stretching is also a major cause of Achilles tendonitis. The other contributors could be ill-suited footwear, uneven ground for training and wrong positioning. Highly arched feet or flat feet also contribute to Achilles tendonitis.

Prevention: Achilles tendonitis can be prevented by following some simple rules while training -

- Proper warm up: A proper warm up is necessary to begin any training session. This would not only ensure that all your body muscles are flexed and conditioned, it will also ensure that your Achilles tendon is up to the strain.
- Plyometric Training: Lower leg and ankle joint can be conditioned by these exercises that involve hopping, jumping, skipping, bounding and similar activities.
- Balancing Exercises: These exercises greatly contribute to improve your body's proprioception - The ability of your body to know where the limbs are at any given point of time. They involve exercises that involve balancing.
- Stretch: Stretching is a very important part of the exercise regimen to keep your muscles conditioned. Stretching lower leg and ankle would greatly contribute to strengthening the Achilles tendon.
- Footwear: To protect the Achilles tendon, place prime importance in wearing proper and well fitting footwear. Good footwear should have enough cushioning, lend stability to ankles and provide support to the leg while walking or running.

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