

10 THINGS NOT TO DO IF YOU HAVE LOWER LIMB TENDON PAIN.

WHAT SHOULDN'T YOU BE DOING?



WHAT IS TENDINOPATHY

Tendon pain in the lower limb is also known as tendinopathy or tendonitis and affects men and women of all ages.

Tendon pain can be a very frustrating condition. Firstly, because it often affects those that are naturally more active, so has a huge impact on being able to do what you love to do. And secondly, it can be difficult to know what to do for the best. There is a lot of conflicting information out there and can involve some trial and error to find the right solution and have a successful recovery for each person's individual condition.

Tendinopathy is a condition in a tendon when the tendon is unable to adapt to the load placed upon it quickly enough. It is often referred to as inflammation but it is not a true inflammatory process.

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281 Port Rd Hindmarsh
Ph 8346 2000
40 Prospect Rd Prospect
Ph 8342 2233

THE PHASES OF TENDON PAIN

There are generally 4 phases of tendon injury

1. Reactive Tendinopathy

Normal tissue adaptation phase

Prognosis: Excellent.

Normal Recovery

2. Tendon Dysrepair

Injury rate > Repair rate

Prognosis: Good.

The tendon tissue is attempting to heal.

It is vital that you prevent deterioration and progression to permanent cell death (phase 3).

3. Degenerative Tendinopathy

Cell death occurs

Prognosis: Can Be Poor

Tendon cells are dying

4. Tendon Tear or Rupture

Catastrophic tissue breakdown

Loss of function.

Prognosis: very poor.



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LOWER LIMB TENDON PAIN

These tendinopathies such as achilles tendinopathy or patella tendinopathy, are one of the most common type of injuries we see at our clinics. It's a side effect of having an active, local population who regularly take part in exercise to help keep them healthy.

Other lower limb tendon problems are the gluteal tendon at the hip, the insertion and origins of the hamstring tendons and even the tendons around the ankle and foot.



10 EVIDENCE BASED TIPS NOT TO DO WITH TENDONS

DO NOT REST COMPLETELY

We prefer the term 'relative rest'. So advise that you avoid activities that directly aggravate your pain, but keep going with others or find alternatives. It's important to carry on 'loading' (so getting your tendon to work) to help your recovery. The evidence promotes a graduated tendon loading program for optimal recovery.

DO NOT RELY ON PASSIVE TREATMENT ALONE

There is overwhelming evidence that passive treatments alone will not help with tendon problems. They can be useful in relieving your pain in the short term, think taping, ice, soft tissue release, and then enabling you to do some more specific exercises to improve tendon loading



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DO NOT HAVE INJECTION THERAPY

This advice refers to having an injection as the first line of treatment. If you've tried a consistent, high quality, exercise based treatment plan and it hasn't worked, then injection therapy may be indicated.

DO NOT IGNORE YOUR PAIN

Use your pain level as a guide for your activity. Pain in your tendon is your body's way of telling you the load is too much and you need to listen to it and reduce the training or load.

DO NOT STRETCH THE TENDON

When you place your tendon on stretch, the lengthening action also compresses the tendon and this has been shown to affect recovery. There are alternative exercises to stretching that are significantly more beneficial to you. Releasing the muscle without placing the tendon in a compressive situation.



DO NOT MASSAGE YOUR TENDON

If it's painful, it's irritated. Massaging directly on the tendon is likely to cause further irritation and make the pain worse. Again work on the muscles and surrounding soft tissue restrictions but not the tendon itself



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DO NOT WORRY ABOUT IMAGES

Try not to have a picture in your mind of what your painful tendon might look like on an ultrasound or MRI scan. Visions of or words like 'degeneration' or 'tears' can make you afraid of using your tendon, when actually, gradually building up what you do and with guided, appropriate rehabilitation is the best way of recovering.

DO NOT BE WORRIED ABOUT RUPTURE

Reassuringly, most people who rupture their tendon have not had any pain. Because you have pain, you are naturally easing off what you do

DON'T TAKE SHORT CUTS WITH REHABILITATION

It takes time for an injured tendon to build strength and capacity (ability to cope with the demands you place upon it). There are no quick, easy fixes unfortunately. With the right rehab, outcomes are excellent. That's exactly why seeing a Physio experienced in the management of these injuries is important. You can work on a customised, specific, evidence based rehabilitation programme that will give you the best outcomes.

DO NOT HAVE A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT LOADS ARE RIGHT FOR YOUR TENDON

This is crucial but not an easy concept for non-Therapist to understand fully. Gradually loading your tendon to optimise recovery is fundamental. What you should be doing and when, can take careful management. Sometimes the internet or 'Bob' at the Running Club, or @Runningnow etc on Twitter aren't fully qualified or experienced enough to help you with this.

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It can be confusing terminology but basically you need to reduce the unaccustomed or increased load that is aggravating the condition. Allow things to settle and then gradually add in appropriate and tendon specific graduated loading. This can start with static work and then progress to loading with movement and then return to sport or activity in a graduated path. Load can be simplified as the demands that you place upon your body and the affected tendon.

So, if you take your achilles tendon, when you walk you are loading it, running you are loading it even more, jumping loading it even more. If you go on your tip toes, you'll be loading it; if you're holding a weight whilst going up and down on your tip toes, you'll be loading it even more.

So loading can be varied by weight, duration, number of times or how long you do something for, how high impact you are working at.....there's lot's or variations.

WHAT NEXT

If you are suffering with a tendon problem, don't waste any more time or prolong your frustration. Seek experienced advice and treatment from us at Hindmarsh and Fitzroy physiotherapy.

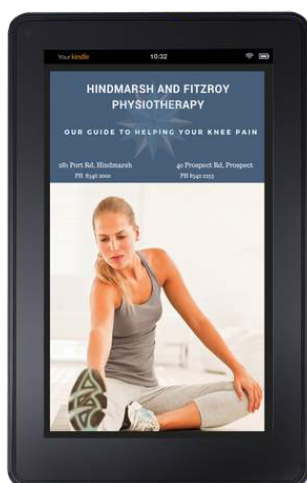
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We hope at least some of the above tips are helpful. You can speak with one of our Physios for more tips and advice on tendon injury management. Call or email us and we will get back to you to answer your questions.

As Physios, we provide extensive education as part of our management and prevention programs, but realize not everyone can find the time or have the confidence to make an appointment, you are welcome to download these informative E-books that you may find useful to get you on your way.

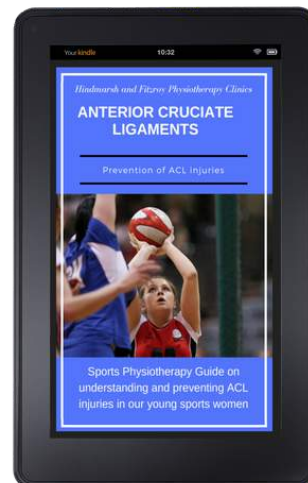
OTHER RESOURCES



MANAGING KNEE PAIN



COMMON SPORTS INJURIES



ACL INJURY PREVENTION

To access our free E-book Resource just click the images above

You can call us on 83462000 at Hindmarsh and 83422233 for Fitzroy, Prospect or **CONTACT US ONLINE HERE** if you would like an appointment

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