

# Achilles Tendon Injuries



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# What is the Achilles Tendon?

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- Longest tendon in the body
- Runs down the back of the lower leg
- Connects the calf muscle to the heel bone
- Helps to lift the heel off the ground
  - Walking
  - Climbing stairs
  - Raise up on tiptoes



# Types of Achilles Tendon Injuries

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- Achilles tendon rupture
- Achilles tendonitis and Achilles tendinosis



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# Achilles Tendon Rupture

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- Occurs when stretched beyond its capacity
- Partial tear
- Complete tear



# What Causes a Rupture?

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- Sudden dorsiflexion (backward bending) of the ankle
  - Tripping and landing on the foot in a certain way
  - Jumping, pivoting, sudden accelerations in running
- Less commonly: illness or medications



# Symptoms of an Achilles Tendon Rupture

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- Sudden pain (like a kick or stab)
- Pain may then subside to a dull ache
- Popping or snapping sensation
- Swelling
- Difficult to walk up stairs or uphill
- Difficult to rise on toes



# Treatment Options for an Achilles Tendon

## Rupture

### Non-surgical treatment

- Higher likelihood of re-tearing the tendon for some patients
  - Cast, walking boot or brace
  - Physical therapy
- Surgical Treatment
    - Lower likelihood of re-tearing the tendon
    - May increase push-off strength
    - May improve muscle function and ankle movement
    - After surgery: cast/walking boot, physical therapy



# Achilles Tendonitis and Tendonosis

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- Achilles tendonitis
  - Inflammation of the tendon
- Achilles tendonosis
  - Degeneration of the tendon





# What Causes Achilles Tendonitis and Tendonosis?

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- Overuse
  - Sudden increase in activity without warming up
  - Tendon isn't properly stretched
  - Leads to micro-injury of tendon fibers
- Wearing high heels or clogs long-term



# Symptoms of Achilles Tendonitis/Tendonosis

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- Tendonitis
  - Pain (aching, burning, stiffness, soreness, tenderness)
  - Often worse after sleep or rest
  - Improves with motion, but then gets worse
- Tendonosis
  - Maybe pain
  - Swelling
  - Bump(s)



# Treatment of Achilles Tendonitis/Tendonosis

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- Nonsurgical strategies
  - Rest
  - Icing
  - Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs
  - Night splint
  - Physical therapy
  - Heel lifts
- Surgery



# For Injuries to the Achilles Tendon... Get a Full Evaluation and Effective Care

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(Place DPM's contact info here)



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