

# Tendonitis

Tendonitis is a common sports injury but can also result from work or recreational activities. It is commonly referred to as an overuse or repetitive strain injury and can happen to any tendon (tissue that attaches your muscles to your bones). Common types of tendonitis occur at the:

- Elbow (tennis/golfers' elbow)
- Shoulder (rotator cuff tendonitis)
- Knee (patellar tendonitis)
- Achilles tendon (Achilles tendonitis)

Tendonitis causes pain and loss of function in the affected area. Typically, it starts with a pain that only occurs when using the area and quickly goes away with rest. Left untreated the condition can get worse until pain persists even with rest.

## Causes of Tendonitis

Tendonitis was once thought to be caused by inflammation, but the latest research shows it more likely results from a break down in the tendon tissue. That's why treatment only focusing on reducing inflammation (e.g., rest, ice, medications) only provides temporary relief. Repetitive activity (e.g., jumping, forceful gripping) is thought to overload the tendon and break down the tissues. This result is pain and difficulty using the affected area. Many factors contribute to developing tendonitis including:

- Muscle weakness or imbalance
- Poor coordination of movement
- Stiff joints
- Working in awkward postures
- Poor work, leisure or sports techniques

## How physiotherapists help

Physiotherapists provide effective treatment for various types of tendonitis. Physiotherapists can identify what is causing the problem and provide suggestions to avoid re-injury.

Although it sounds like the wrong thing to do, research shows specific exercises for the tendon helps stimulate the tendon's internal repair system and restore strength and flexibility. Not any exercise will work. Programs must be specifically tailored to your problem. Treatment is not a quick fix because it takes time to build strength and flexibility and restore function.

## Your physiotherapist will:

- Examine and assess the tendon causing the problem
- Assess if posture, muscle tightness, joint stiffness, or activities contribute to the problem
- Develop a customized treatment plan that considers how easily your pain is aggravated
- Provide a specific stretching and strengthening program to gradually and safely restore the tendon's strength and flexibility



Physiotherapy Alberta  
College + Association

The **Movement** Specialists.

[www.physiotherapyalberta.ca](http://www.physiotherapyalberta.ca)

