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Patient Education

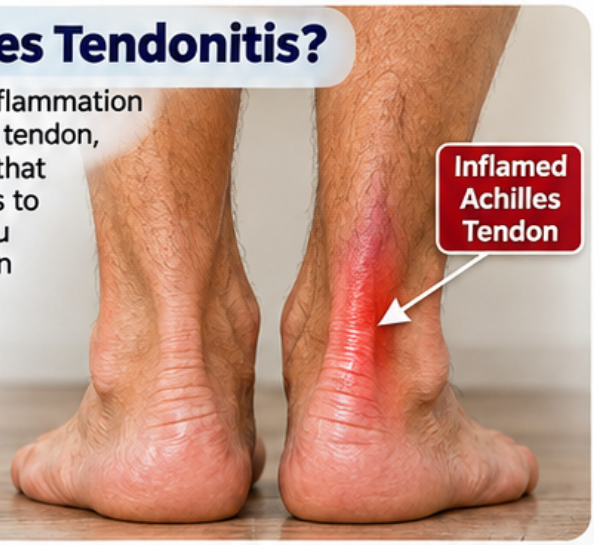
Achilles Tendonitis

Causes, Treatment and the Role of Orthotics



What Is Achilles Tendonitis?

Achilles tendonitis is an inflammation or irritation of the Achilles tendon, the strong band of tissue that connects the calf muscles to the heel bone. It helps you push off the ground when walking, running and climbing. When the tendon is overused or stressed, it can become painful, swollen and less flexible.



Common Symptoms

- ✓ Pain and tenderness in the back of the heel, especially with activity
- ✓ Swelling and thickening of the tendon
- ✓ Stiffness, often worse in the morning
- ✓ Pain when stretching the calf or pushing off the foot
- ✓ Symptoms that gradually worsen over time



How Is It Treated?

Treatment is based on a thorough examination to confirm the diagnosis and rule out other problems such as a partial tendon tear, heel fracture or soft tissue injury. Treatment may include:

- ✓ Rest and temporary reduction of activity
- ✓ Ice and anti-inflammatory medication
- ✓ Stretching and physical therapy
- ✓ Heel lifts or shoe padding to reduce tendon strain
- ✓ Custom orthotics to correct abnormal foot function
- ✓ Short-term immobilization (boot or brace) if needed
- ✓ Surgery is rarely required and is used only in persistent or severe cases.

What Causes It?

Several factors can place excessive stress on the Achilles tendon and lead to tendonitis, including:

- Overuse from running, sports or repetitive activity
- Sudden increase in training or activity level
- Abnormal foot mechanics (such as overpronation or a high arch)
- Inadequate stretching or poor flexibility
- Improper or worn-out footwear
- Direct injury or trauma to the tendon
- Tight calf muscles
- Age-related changes that decrease tendon elasticity

How Orthotics Help

Custom orthotics are an important part of treatment and long-term prevention of Achilles tendonitis.



- ✓ **Improve foot alignment** – correct abnormal mechanics such as overpronation that increase stress on the Achilles tendon.
- ✓ **Reduce tendon strain** – by supporting the arch and controlling excessive motion of the foot.
- ✓ **Distribute pressure more evenly** – lowering the load on the tendon with each step.
- ✓ **Provide heel control and cushioning** – to reduce irritation and allow healing.
- ✓ **Help prevent recurrence** – by addressing the underlying biomechanical cause of the problem.