

Achilles tendinosis is a chronic degenerative change in the central part of the Achilles tendon. This occurs when the tendon is overloaded for a very long period of time. Factors that can contribute to this condition include overuse from sporting activities or work activities that require a lot of standing, walking and climbing, being overweight, abnormalities of the foot, and getting older. This is a chronic change in the tendon that does not resolve easily.

Treatment of this condition is initially nonoperative and can include the following interventions:

1. Eccentric Achilles muscle strengthening exercises (as illustrated below).
2. A heel lift to remove some of the tension from the Achilles tendon.
3. Modification of training, or other weightbearing activities.
4. Correction of any biomechanical abnormalities of the foot with devices such as orthotics
5. A topical application of glycerol trinitrate (NTG 4-6 months tx)
6. Anti-inflammatory medications (i.e., naproxen or ibuprofen).
7. Occasionally, a cast or cast brace can be helpful.

Typically three quarters of the patients can be significantly improved while using these methods, but it may take up to six months for this goal to be realized. If the non-operative treatment does not help, there are several operative approaches that can be considered and are usually helpful.



Three sets of 15 eccentric heel drops twice a day, 7 days a week, for 12 weeks. This type of eccentric tendon loading is painful, and patients should continue their exercises despite experiencing pain or discomfort at or around the tendon. The exercises are supposed to be painful; if there is no tendon pain during the exercise, the load should be increased gradually to reach “a new level of painful training.”