

Overview

There are a variety of different tendons all over your body. They connect muscles to bones and help us to move. A common cause of foot or ankle pain is tendinopathy (also known as Tendinitis) where the tendon gets injured and becomes swollen, painful and weak. There is also a painful condition called Tenosynovitis which is swelling and inflammation of the sheath that surrounds the tendon.

Although there are many causes for tendon problems they are usually a result of:

- Repetitive movements (over use)
- Poor foot posture
- Injury from activity
- Poor footwear
- Poor conditioning – weak muscles & being overweight.
- Degenerative changes due to age and/or medical history
- Tight muscles

The main symptoms of a tendon strain are:

- Pain in a tendon that gets worse when you move
- Difficulty moving the tendon
- Feeling a grating or crackling sensation when you move the tendon
- Swelling, sometimes with heat or redness
- A lump along the tendon



There are many different types of tendinopathy, depending on which area of the body is affected.

How to treat strains yourself.

Follow the 4 steps known as RICE therapy for 2 to 3 days to help bring down swelling and support the injury:

- **Rest** – stop the exercise or activities that caused the injury until you feel better
- **Ice** – put an ice pack (you could use a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a tea towel) on the injury for up to 20 minutes every 2 to 3 hours
- **Compress** – wrap a bandage around the injury to support it
- **Elevate** – if possible, keep the injured area raised on a pillow when sitting or lying down

To help prevent swelling during the first 2 to 3 days, try to avoid:

- heat, such as hot baths and heat packs
- alcohol
- massages

Once your symptoms have started to improve make sure you start to move your foot and ankle to prevent the tendon from becoming stiff and gradually get back to normal activity.

A pharmacist can help with tendonitis.

A pharmacist can recommend the best painkiller. This might be tablets or a cream or gel you rub on the skin.

Paracetamol and ibuprofen can help to ease mild pain. Wait for 48 hours after your injury before taking ibuprofen, because it can slow down healing.

Tendons can take a while to settle down especially as you get a little older, so be patient. If your symptoms have not started to settle within 12 weeks you can contact the Podiatry & Orthotics service for further advice - 01633 615225 or risca.podiatry@wales.nhs.uk .

**This document is available in Welsh /
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg.**