



## Achilles Tendonitis

I quite often get people in clinic who tell me they have a problem with their 'Hercules' Tendon at the back of their heel. Hercules was the Greek divine hero famous for his strength. This is actually quite an appropriate name as the **tendon** at the back of the **heel** (which is actually called the Achilles) is the strongest in the body.

The tendon joins the calf to the heel bone. It plays a major part in propelling us forward when we walk or run, and therefore keeping the tendon strong and flexible can have a huge impact on athletic performance.

One of the most debilitating conditions for anyone who is sporty can be tendonitis of the Achilles. This is where the **tendon** becomes thickened and inflamed with activity.

The most common cause of tendonitis is overuse. When stepping up a training programme it is important to monitor the rate of increasing intensity. Increasing the stress on the tendon leads to micro-trauma of the fibres. Continuing to use the tendon leads to further trauma and further pain.

People who are very active are at risk of tendonitis. However, some sedentary people are too as their tendons may become weaker and tighter with lack of use.

If you start to develop **pain**, **stiffness** and **swelling** at the **heel**, try rest and ice for a couple of days. After this see your **physiotherapist** to help you with treatments including stretching and eccentric strengthening programmes as well as local treatments like massage, ultrasound and kinesio-taping.

## **Mark Roe - Physiotherapist**