

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR TENDON REHABILITATION

What your tendon needs to heal and how you can monitor your response to rehab from home.

What is a Tendinopathy?

Tendinopathy is a generic term for clinical conditions (including pain and pathological characteristics) associated with overuse or compression of tendons. Tendinopathy presents with symptoms like pain, reduced function, and lower tolerance for physical activity.

Lower limb tendinopathy alone will affect up to 12% of the population; this number is even higher in athletic/active populations.

Common Examples

- Lateral Epicondylitis (Tennis Elbow)
- Medial Epicondylitis (Golfers Elbow)
- Patellar Tendinopathy (Jumpers Knee)
- Achilles Tendinopathy
- Rotator Cuff Tendinopathy

What Should You Expect?

So, you have a tendinopathy. What's next? **Tendons love to be loaded** and this is what they need to recover. Research tells us that heavy slow resistance (HSR) training and eccentric training both work well for tendons, but in either case **the load has to be heavy**. You'll work with your physio to establish a loading program that fits your needs.

Tendon healing takes time. You can start to see improvements in pain and function in as little as two weeks from implementing a loading program, but to have sufficient healing in the tendon you should **plan to adhere to your PT program for a minimum of 12 weeks**.

Keep in mind that this timeline is not one-size-fits-all. There are many factors that contribute to your healing, so your journey could look different. Consistency with your loading program will be key to meeting your goals!

SOME PAIN DURING EXERCISE IS OK BUT MONITORING IT IS IMPORTANT

How Much Pain is OK?

When it comes to tendon rehab, **avoiding pain altogether typically results in an underloaded tendon** which can delay or prevent your healing. Use this guide to help you determine how much pain is OK during and after exercise:

Symptom guide for return to activity with tendon pain										
No pain				Maximum pain						
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OK	OK	OK	OK	CAUTION	CAUTION	STOP	STOP	STOP	STOP	STOP
Continue exercises				Reduce exercises		Stop exercise and allow to settle, then restart				
(Silbernagel, 2007)										

- **0 – 3:** Some discomfort is acceptable during exercise. The pain should resolve soon after exercising has stopped.
- **4 – 5:** Proceed with caution, but exercising in this zone *can be* OK. If the pain does not subside after completing your exercises, or if you feel worse the next day, this means you need to reduce (not stop) your exercise.
- **6+:** Intense pain during or after your exercise can indicate that you're overloading your tendon. If this is the case, stop the exercise and consult with your physio.

24 - 48 Hours Post Exercise

Take note of how you feel the following two days. Some soreness is to be expected post-exercise; however, your pain should not:

- Exceed 5 after exercise has stopped
- Exceed 5 the morning after exercise
- Increase in the 48 hours post-exercise by more than 2 points from pre-exercise pain levels.

Your pain and stiffness should NOT increase from week to week.

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