

Tendon Pain Got You Sidelined?

Your Guide to Smart Recovery

(and Why Rest Isn't Always Best!)



Ever felt a stubborn ache in your heel, elbow, or shoulder that just won't go away? You might be dealing with tendinopathy, a common condition that affects tendons – those amazing connectors in our bodies!

At Peach Physiotherapy & Wellness Centre in Chatham-Kent, we see many patients struggling with tendon pain. It can be frustrating, limiting your favourite activities, and making everyday movements uncomfortable. But here's the good news: with the right approach, you can get back to doing what you love!

Let's demystify tendons and how we tackle their pain together.



What are tendons? And why to they matter so much?

Think of your body as a magnificent machine. Muscles create movement by contracting, but how does that force actually pull on your bones to move a joint? That's where tendons come in!

What they're made of:

Tendons are tough, flexible cords made mostly of collagen, a super strong, fibrous protein. Think of them like tiny, tightly braided ropes working hard to connect your muscles to your bones.

Their role in movement:

Tendons are the important link between your muscles and bones. When your muscle contracts, the tendon pulls on the bone to create movement. They also act like springs, storing and releasing energy to make your movements smoother and more efficient. Without healthy tendons, moving with power and ease just wouldn't happen!



Understanding Tendinopathy: More Than Just Inflammation

For a long time, tendon pain was simply called "tendinitis" (suggesting inflammation). We now know that for most ongoing tendon pain, it's more about a failed healing response to stress or overuse rather than just inflammation. This is why we use the term tendinopathy.

Understanding this is key to getting the right treatment. Tendinopathy often presents in two main ways:

TYPE	DETAILS
REACTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What it is: This is like your tendon shouting for help! It usually happens after a sudden increase in activity (e.g., you suddenly start running much more, or lift heavier weights than usual). The tendon tries to protect itself by swelling and thickening.• What it feels like: Often sharp, intense pain, especially during or immediately after activity.• Key: This stage is often reversible with careful management and temporary reduction in aggravating activities.
DEGENERATIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What it is: If the reactive stage isn't managed well, or with long-term overuse, the tendon's structure can start to break down. The collagen fibres might become disorganized, making the tendon weaker and less efficient.• What it feels like: Often a dull, persistent ache that might "warm up" with activity but often returns later or the next day. It's less about sharp pain and more about a chronic, nagging discomfort.• Key: This stage requires a more consistent and strategic loading program to rebuild the tendon's strength and structure.



Smart Recovery:

The Keys to Healing Your Tendons

1) Rest is NOT Always Best (It's About Optimal Loading):

- Complete rest weakens tendons. For a sudden flare-up, we might recommend "relative rest" – reducing aggravating activities, but not stopping all movement. The goal is always to get back to controlled, beneficial movement as soon as possible.
- Your tendon needs just the right amount of stress to encourage healing, not too much and not too little.

2) Progressive Loading is Your Superpower:

- Tendon healing is a gradual process. We'll guide you through specific exercises, often involving heavy, slow resistance. This is the best way to encourage those collagen fibres to rebuild stronger and more organized.
- Consistency is key – think of it like building a muscle; you need regular, directed work.

3) Don't Fear ALL Pain (But Listen to Your Body!):

- Some mild discomfort during exercise (up to about a 4 or 5 out of 10 on a pain scale, where 10 is the worst pain) is often acceptable during tendon rehab.
- However, pain should not worsen by more than 2 points during the exercise, and it should settle back down to baseline within 24-48 hours. If it spikes or lingers, we've done too much, and we'll adjust!

4) Healing Takes Time (Be Patient!):

- Tendon tissues are slow to adapt and rebuild. Expect a minimum of 12 weeks of consistent, tailored exercise to see significant changes. There are no quick fixes, but steady progress will get you there.

5) Isometrics: Your Secret Weapon for Quick Pain Relief (Sometimes!):

- Specific, strong, sustained contractions of the muscle (called isometrics) can sometimes provide immediate, temporary pain relief. This can be useful before an activity or exercise session.

6) Avoid Unnecessary Compression and Excessive Stretching:

- Healthy tendons are naturally stiff and robust. For a painful tendon, excessive stretching or direct compression can sometimes aggravate the tendon and hinder healing.
- We'll guide you on movements to avoid and ways to move that support your tendon's healing, rather than irritating it.

A Comprehensive Approach to Your Tendon Health

At Peach Physiotherapy & Wellness Centre, our team understands that tendon pain can be complex. That's why your care might also include:

- **Manual Therapy:** Hands-on techniques applied by our therapists to improve joint and soft tissue movement, reduce pain, and restore proper tissue function around your affected tendon.
- **Therapeutic Modalities:** We utilize cutting-edge tools like Radial Shockwave Therapy to break down calcifications and promote healing in chronic tendon conditions, and Class IV Laser Therapy to reduce pain and inflammation while accelerating tissue repair at a cellular level.
- **Custom Foot Orthotics:** Precise, custom-made inserts designed to provide support, alignment, and comfort for your feet, impacting your entire musculoskeletal system from the ground up, especially relevant for Achilles or foot tendon issues.

Whether you're struggling with a runner's knee, a persistent tennis elbow, or an aching Achilles tendon, our friendly, evidence-based team is here in Chatham-Kent to guide you through your recovery. We're committed to helping you understand your body, manage your pain, and build lasting strength to get you back to your best.

