

Integrated Musculoskeletal Service
Physiotherapy Department

Peroneal Tendinopathy

Outer Ankle Tendon Pain

Information and exercise leaflet for patients and carers



What is the Peroneal Tendon?

Tendon pain on the outer side of the ankle is called Peroneal Tendinopathy. The Peroneal tendon is a cord-like structure that attaches a muscle on the outside of your lower-leg to the outside of your foot.

When the Peroneal tendon lifts the outer edge of your foot and is very important for walking and balance.

What is Peroneal Tendinopathy?

Tendinopathy is a condition that involves pain and reduced strength in a tendon. This often occurs following a change in activity levels. It may result from doing more activity than previously, however it can also be a result of doing less than you would normally for example, after a period of illness or extended rest.

If you have a Peroneal Tendinopathy, you will likely experience pain on the outer aspect of your foot and/or just behind your outer ankle bone (lateral malleolus).

The result is that the irritated tendon means the activities you do now are too much for you to tolerate. Therefore, you get pain.

Common features

Most people will experience pain after rest and first thing in the morning.

When following the correct advice and rehabilitation programme full recovery can take between 3 and 12 months.

Should I be resting or moving?

You are safe and generally better off if you move. There is no evidence to suggest your tendon is at greater risk of damage with more activity.

If you keep still and significantly reduce your activity levels, your tendon may become more irritated, and your muscles will become weaker leading to further pain and reduced strength.

Activity Diary and Modifications

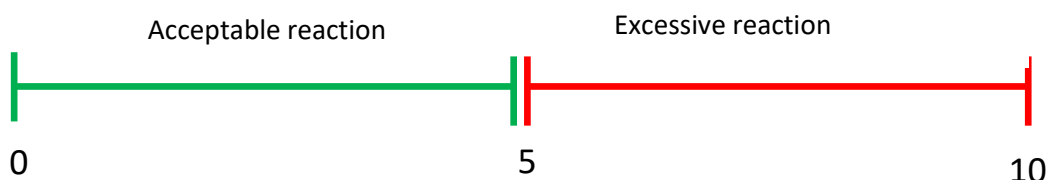
It is sometimes useful to make a note of the daily activities that can potentially aggravate your symptoms. Below are some of the main aggravators and some modifications you can make to help reduce the painful reaction.

Aggravator	Modification
Walking on uneven ground	Ensure you wear supportive footwear. Often an ankle/lace-up boot can give extra stability and reduce the strain on the tendon.
Sitting down or resting for too long	Try to avoid prolonged rest. Break up periods of sitting by getting up and moving every 20-30 mins.
Exercising through pain and for prolonged periods.	Use the reaction rules guide below to ensure that you do not cause a painful reaction.

How do I know if I am doing too much?

It is common to get a painful reaction if too much load is put through the tendon. If this pain is more than 5/10 (with 10 being the worst pain imaginable) and lasts for more than 24 hours, check what you have been doing and ease back, not necessarily stop/avoid in future.

Once this has settled you can start to gradually introduce your activities and exercises again. If you have a mild aggravation (pain is less than 5/10) and this settles within 24 hours then keep going with your exercises and gradually return to full activities (see below).



Pain relief and injections

Painkillers can help you keep moving. However, it is important to discuss this with your GP, especially if you are taking any other medication.

Injections are not recommended for this problem.

Ice

You could try applying ice **after** activity to help reduce pain and/or inflammation.

If you experience reduced sensation, numbness, or have circulatory problems you should discuss the use of ice with a healthcare professional prior to using them. Ice can burn skin; therefore, you should always use a towel to cover the area and check their skin regularly for any changes and signs of burning. A damp towel is more effective when applying ice.

Always mark the packet of frozen peas before putting them back in the freezer as they would be unsafe to eat after being defrosted numerous times.

What about sports or work?

You should use the previously mentioned reaction rules to highlight whether a return/adaptation to sport or work is advisable.

Do I need any tests?

Peroneal Tendinopathy is diagnosed clinically. Scans and other investigations are often not recommended as they are not required.

What are the aims of Physiotherapy?

The aims of physiotherapy are to improve muscle strength, load tolerance and pain in your tendon. This should allow you to return to your previous activities.

General measures to help

Weight control

If you are overweight, try to lose some weight as the extra burden placed on your tendon can make symptoms worse. Even a modest weight loss can make quite a difference.

Poor diet, high cholesterol and diabetes are linked to an increased risk of developing a tendinopathy and poorer healing.

Warning Signs

If you develop new or worsening symptoms, if you are unwell with the pain, or under the age of 16 years, seek medical advice.

The following symptoms are very rare, but if you suddenly develop any of them, you should seek urgent medical attention at your local Urgent Care Centre.

- Sudden onset of Achilles pain, with a “pop” or snapping sound/sensation.
- Inability to weight-bear through the foot/ankle.
- New significant injury to the leg/foot/ankle.
- Constant night pain in the foot/ankle (that prevents rest/sleep).
- Significant swelling, colour change or temperature change in the foot/ankle or extending up the leg.
- Lumps in the foot/ankle.
- Signs of infection i.e. night sweats that are out of the ordinary, high temperature and feeling unwell.
- Unexplained weight loss

If your symptoms fail to improve within 6-8 weeks with this regime you should contact your doctor for a physiotherapy referral.

If your symptoms are improving (even slowly), continue for up to 3 months.

Exercises for Peroneal Tendinopathy

Do not work into pain but it is ok for your muscles to feel tired. If the number of repetitions or length of the hold is too long, back off slightly, but aim to build up to the stated level.

Use the reaction rules to guide your exercise intensity. If pain is stopping you engaging in rehab, you should speak to your GP about pain relief promptly.

Flare-ups may happen; if it doesn't settle in a couple of weeks, then seek further advice.



Alphabet Ankle Sitting

Sitting bare foot, lift your foot off the floor. Use your toes and ankle to draw letters of the alphabet. Start with "a" and then progress right through the alphabet to "z". Keep each letter and movement controlled and specific.

Hold for 30 seconds Repeat 5 times 3 times daily



Self-Resisted Eversion

Sitting on a chair, cross your feet keeping your heels on the floor. Push the outside of your feet against each other. This is a strengthening exercise for your ankles.

Hold for 30 seconds Repeat 5 times 3 times daily



Calf raises

Stand upright and hold onto a wall/table for balance if required. Slowly raise up onto your toes and control the movement back down. This exercise will strengthen the calf muscles and ankle joints. Repeat for the repetitions suggested, or until muscle tiredness or discomfort

Repeat 10- 30 reps 3 times daily

Once you are able to perform 30 repetitions in one go, progress to trying to do it on the affected leg only, holding on to something for balance



One leg Stand

Stand on one leg and try to keep your balance. Be careful and hold on to a wall for support when you first start this exercise. A single leg balance exercise such as this is an enormously valuable exercise, and its benefits including strengthening the muscles and ligaments around the ankles and knees and improving balance.

Hold for 30 seconds Repeat 5 times 3 times daily

Build up to holding for 2 minutes

If you require this document in an alternative format or language, please contact:

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Tel: 01254 736041 **Email:** elmsk@nhs.net

Polish

W celu otrzymania tego dokumentu w innym formacie lub języku, prosimy o kontakt z

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵਿਕਲਪਿਕ ਫਾਰਮੈਟ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੋੜੀਂਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ

Urdu

اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کی ایک متبادل شکل (فارمیٹ) یا زبان میں ضرورت ہے تو براہ مہربانی رابطہ کریں

Bengali

অন্য ভাষায় এই প্রচারপত্রটি অন্য কোনো আকারে বা অন্য ভাষায় চান, তাহলে যোগাযোগ করবেন

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de acest document într-un format sau limbă alternativă, vă rugăm să contactați

Lithuanian

Norint gauti šį dokumentą kitu formatu ar kita kalba, prašome susisiekti su mumis

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