



## **Achilles Tendonitis**

The Achilles tendon is formed from the joining of two posterior lower leg muscle tendons, and it inserts into the calcaneus (heel bone). A variety of mechanisms including overuse of muscles, excess weight, incorrect body movements, and training technique errors can irritate the tendon leading to inflammation (tendonitis).

Treatment initially focuses on decreasing the inflammation and controlling the pain through the use of modalities such as ultrasound, ice, and acupuncture. Stretching exercises for the muscles involved will be an important part of treatment. Aggravating factors will be identified and addressed to prevent further irritation. Strengthening and functional exercises will be added as appropriate.

The therapeutic modalities commonly used include:

**Ultrasound:** uses sound waves and may be used to decrease scar tissue, increase blood flow, or decrease pain.

**Interferential Current:** uses electrical current to decrease pain, can also be used to elicit muscle contraction and decrease swelling.

**Acupuncture:** uses small, solid needles to encourage healing, reduce pain, and improve function of affected areas of the body.

What can you do at home?

**Rest:** by decreasing your activity you allow your body a chance to heal itself. When you start to feel better it is important to ease back into activities which might be aggravating. Listen to your body - pain means that you have done too much.

**Ice:** ice decreases the metabolism of your cells so that they do not die despite a decrease in oxygen to the injured area. Ice should be kept on for approximately 15 minutes, several times a day. The injured area should be elevated (above the level of your heart) at the same time. Use a wet towel between the ice and your skin to protect against frostbite. You can use frozen veggies, cold packs, or real ice.