

## **Tendonitis Anyone?**

Tennis Elbow, Golfer's Elbow, Achilles Tendonitis, Plantar Faciitis, Patella Tendonitis, Iliotibial band (ITB) syndrome, sound familiar? If you live an active lifestyle or know someone who does a few or all of these conditions will sound familiar. The main questions are what is tendonitis? How or why does it happen? How do I get rid of it? And What can be done to prevent it in the future.

Tendonitis is simply the inflammation of a tendon. This inflammation is almost always chronic (been around a long time). It starts by just acting up after an activity, then during the activity as well, until finally it seems to never go away and even eventually prevents you from doing this activity. If you are like most people it is not until you can't take the pain anymore or you can't do your favorite activity anymore that you finally seek help. Unfortunately the most common treatment for these problems is Advil (or some other type of NSAID), stronger pain killers, muscle relaxers, and of course rest. I say unfortunately because more often than not these solutions are temporary at best, and do not address the underlying cause of the problem.

Tendonitis develops slowly. For the first few weeks or even months you may not even know its there or if you do, it appears to be a minor inflammation and you think it will go away. Most of the time two factors need to be present at the same time. The first is overuse. The tendon needs to be overused, under-rested and under-nourished before it will become chronically inflamed. The second is poor mechanics. Poor mechanics is an integral part because if it was just overuse by itself it probably would go away with rest. The poor mechanics is what keeps it coming back time after time. Once it truly becomes chronic- significant muscle, tendon, ligament, and joint damage is probable.

If you have or have had these issues in the past you know they are difficult and stubborn to manage. Depending on where you are in the inflammatory cycle would determine the solution. Strict "overuse only" cases may get better on there own if they have not been around too long. Otherwise the first step is to repair the damage. All the rest in the world will not repair the damage done to the tendons and neighboring tissues. All the scar tissue build up, muscle and nerve adhesions, and joint restrictions need to be resolved first. This is best accomplished through Active Release Technique and joint adjustments/ mobilizations. Other treatments include ultrasound and massage. Once the existing damage is repaired the biomechanics of your movement need to be assessed and remedied. Resolving these types of issues are much more complicated. You may just need to work with a coach on your form, you may need supportive appliances like orthotics or braces, you may have pre-existing alignment issues restricting you ability to attain full range of motion, you may have poor seated or standing postures, or a multitude of other concerns. Almost all of which are correctable with a little work and dedication. Regardless of the problem you would need to find someone qualified in assessing a whole person and all of their parts.

Once you've healed the damage and addressed the cause of the problem you would be in pretty good shape to go full steam ahead with your sports and/or activities. Preventing

relapses and new problems is quite simple. Stay on top of the causes. If you needed orthotics you have to make sure your feet are checked and orthotics replaced appropriately. If your alignment was off you need to get checked periodically to make sure your corrections are holding. Also listen to your body. If you make the same mistake of waiting for things to get better or go away on their own, you will be right back to where you started. On the first sign of a relapse or new problem get it checked out immediately. The longer you wait, the harder it is to resolve.