



the Challenge of Treating Tendinitis

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Physical Therapists need a variety of approaches when it comes to treating tendinitis problems because tendinitis can occur in many different parts of the body (shoulder, elbow, wrist, knee, and ankle) and each area may respond differently to treatment.

The overall approach is to quickly reduce the pain and swelling; allow the tissue to heal; and then restore strength, motion and function. Let's take a look at how this is done from a physical therapy viewpoint.

First, the motion or activity that is causing the problem needs to be identified and isolated. This is accomplished by thoroughly evaluating the person and may occasionally require a trip to the work site if that is where the problem is occurring. Once the culprit is found, a Physical Therapist can help the person avoid the stressful movements by reorganizing how the activity is set up or finding movement alternatives. In many cases, the activity may need to be avoided all together until the tissue has completely recovered.

The Physical Therapist aids the reduction of pain and swelling with the use of various treatment aides such as ultrasound or electrical stimulation, which may be used in combination with a topical anti-inflammatory medication prescribed by a doctor. Gentle manual therapy techniques, specific types of soft tissue massage and the utilization of ice can also assist in the healing process.

Next, the tendon may need to rest. The Physical Therapist can show you how to protect the area with a supportive device, taping or wrapping. This may help reduce



Sheila Yonemoto, PT—Owner, Yonemoto Physical Therapy

the isolated stress on the area, and it lets the inflamed tendons recover while still allowing use. The therapist can also be helpful in finding an appropriate resting position to aid in healing.

Once healing has started, it is vital that the muscles and tendons in the involved area regain their motion, strength and endurance. The Physical Therapist is the key person to guide this part of the process. The exercises need to be sequenced and coordinated correctly for maximum benefit.

The activities also need to be correctly applied in order to allow maximum function with minimum stress on the injured body part or tendon.

Staying healthy takes both training and education. Your Physical Therapist is an expert in both and can teach you how to avoid further injury in the future. It's called "Prevention" and we would be happy to help you with this!



RISK FACTORS that cause **TENDINITIS** and what to do about them

by Gaynor Hale,
Physical Therapist



“If the inflammation goes unchecked the situation can deteriorate to the point where surgery is needed to remove calcium deposits that can develop in the tendon, to remove the inflamed tissue around the tendon or to stabilize the joint.”

Atendon is a soft tissue that connects a muscle to bone. Because the muscles are constantly putting strain on the tendon as they move tendons can become inflamed or irritated. This inflammation and irritation to the tendon is called tendinitis. Any activity, injury or ailment which causes swelling and inflammation of the tendon can also put pressure on nerves that are in close proximity to the tendon, causing further pain.

The most common symptoms of tendinitis are:

1. Pain and tenderness along the tendon, sometimes worse at night.
2. Pain that is worse with movement or activity.
3. Swelling and sometimes redness over the tendon area.
4. Stiffness in the joint.
5. A rubbing or snapping “heard” or felt with motion.

The most common causes of tendinitis are:

1. **Overuse:** when activity requires a high level of repetition, tendons can be injured or irritated leading to tendinitis. Awkward positioning of a body part, such as working with your arm over your head for long periods, typing in a position with head and shoulders hunched over, etc.
2. **Poor conditioning:** when tendons are

being used at a level of activity they are not accustomed to.

3. **Age:** tendons can lose their elasticity and ability with age. They don’t glide as smoothly as they used to. This is possibly due to a change in the blood vessels that supply nutrition to the tendons. With these changes and the changes in a person’s posture with age, tendons can become irritated and inflamed more easily.

4. **Deficiency in Vitamin B6:** There is some evidence that a deficiency in vitamin B6 can also contribute to tendinitis.

Tendinitis can occur in numerous places in the body because there are so many tendons connecting all the muscles to the bones. The following are common sites where tendinitis occurs:

1. **Shoulder:** This involves the rotator cuff tendons or the biceps tendon. These forms of tendinitis are sometimes referred to as “swimmer’s shoulder” or “pitcher’s shoulder.”
2. **Elbow:** when the inside of the elbow is involved it is called “golfer’s elbow.” When it is the outside area of the elbow, it is called “tennis elbow.”
3. **Knee:** this is commonly called “jumper’s knee” with pain and inflammation around the knee cap.
4. **Foot:** achilles tendinitis involves the heel of the foot and the tendon attached to it.



5. Wrists: when affected with tendinitis, it is called carpal tunnel syndrome and involves the tendons going into the wrist.

The goal of treatment is to relieve the pain and decrease the inflammation in the tendon. Treatment would involve resting the affected area, usually by simply stopping the activity that caused the irritation. For a sport or recreational activity it would be fairly simple. If the activity in question involves work tasks, it becomes more complicated. A worker who has developed tendinitis from repetitive work activities frequently cannot return to those same tasks. In some cases resting the involved area might require the use of braces or splints. These are sometimes worn only at night and sometimes during activity.

The use of ice or heat can be therapeutic as can the use of anti-inflammatory medications such as ibuprofen or aspirin. The latter should be determined by the doctor. In some cases steroid injections, such as cortisone, may be used to break up calcium deposits that can develop in the tendon in severe cases or to give relief to severe inflammation.

If the inflammation goes unchecked by continuing the harmful activity or not receiving effective treatment, the situation can deteriorate to the point where surgery is needed to remove calcium deposits that can develop in the tendon, to remove the inflamed tissue around the tendon or to stabilize the joint.

Physical Therapy is needed to restore

mobility and function of the tendon and joint that is involved. Stretching and strengthening exercises are vital in restoring normal function, aiding the healing process and preventing further injury. Additionally, the use of heat/cold, ultrasound and other modalities can help to decrease the pain and break up the calcium deposits. In some cases the cortisone can be administered through the skin right over the tendon using ultrasound or electrical stimulation. Deep friction massage can also aid the healing and improve flexibility.

Prevention is a key factor. This is accomplished by 1) avoiding repetitive motion and overuse, 2) doing warm-up exercises before vigorous activity 3) properly conditioning to keep muscles strong and flexible and 4) wearing appropriate shoes.

Tips and Tricks

AID AND TIPS FOR EARLY ONSET OF TENDINITIS

This is called the R.I.C.E. treatment:



1. Rest. Stop whatever activity you are doing that is irritating the tendon. If it is in the knee or foot you may need to sit or lay down to rest the affected area. For wrists, elbows or shoulders a sling may be helpful.

2. Ice. Apply ice or a cold cloth over the inflamed area. Apply for 15 to 20 minutes at a time, every few hours for the first 24 to 48 hours. This will reduce the swelling and tenderness.



3. Compress. Apply some compression to the area with an ace bandage to reduce swelling. There are tennis elbow straps to apply pressure to the elbow.



4. Elevate. Elevate the part that is affected by placing it on pillows or a footstool. To be effective it should be elevated above the heart.



FAQ

Can tendinitis cause permanent damage?

Yes, if it goes untreated or you continue to do the activity that is causing the damage, calcium deposits can develop or the tendon can rupture.

What can I do to keep the tendinitis from coming back?

Do warm-up exercises before any vigorous activity and keep yourself fit and flexible.

I have tennis elbow, how long do I have to stay away from playing tennis?

Until the pain and inflammation are gone and you have appropriately rehabilitated the strength and

flexibility in your arm. Don't forget to go back at it gradually.

The ice is not very comfortable on my elbow, what does it do for my tendinitis?

It prevents swelling and reduces the pain.

What is a “calcific tendinitis?”

This means that there are calcium deposits in the tendon.

How is it treated?

Cortisone injections might break up the deposits or it might take surgery to remove them.

Do you need to see a Physical Therapist for your tendinitis? Take this simple test...

YES	NO	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My heel hurts every time I walk for any distance.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My elbow used to hurt only when I played tennis. Now it aches for a couple of hours after that too.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wake up in the night with shoulder pain after I have been painting ceilings or working overhead.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I work on a computer all day and lately my wrists have been aching when I go home.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	When I raise my arm it hurts and it feels like something is rubbing.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	When I have to lift heavy objects my elbow hurts.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I am getting tingling in my hands and my wrists feel swollen.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have to do a lot of physical activity at work and I don't know what to do to get in shape to do it safely.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My elbow hurts when I carry things.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I am on the local swim team and noticed that my right shoulder is hurting after practice.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I lay carpets for a living and lately my knees have been hurting around my knee caps.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My elbow feels stiff when I play golf and lately it has started to ache on the inside of my elbow.

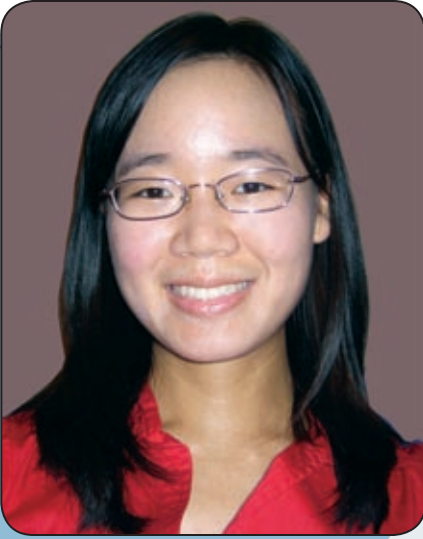
Results:

If you checked “Yes” for any statement, then you may want to consult a doctor for advice. Physical Therapy may be able to help you.



Featured Therapist

Patty Ou, D.P.T.



Patty grew up in Taiwan but completed junior high and high school in southern California. She later graduated from UCLA with a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Molecular, Cell, and Developmental Biology, and a Master of Public Health. Patty worked at a plant molecular biology lab to study the evolution of nodule development in legumes. She was editor of the UCLA Undergraduate Science Journal, and a performer with the Chinese Cultural Dance Club at UCLA. Patty volunteered at health screening fairs to measure blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol and also provided health education and consultation to community members.

Patty decided to go into physical therapy to work with patients on a personal level to promote health and wellness. She obtained her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from USC in 2011. Patty has experience working in a variety of settings, including acute care hospital, nursing facility, and outpatient orthopedic and pediatric centers. She enjoys treating patients with diverse demographics and conditions in working toward building a healthier lifestyle. Patty loves to be creative with treatment.

She can speak Mandarin Chinese and clinical Spanish. In her spare time, Patty loves traveling, hiking, and trying out restaurants. She also likes musicals, and her favorites include Rent, Avenue Q, and Mama Mia. She is excited to join the Yonemoto Physical Therapy team.

SUCCESSSES

What patients are saying . . .

I really have been saved from stress caused by tendinitis in my wrist, shoulder, and hands! Thanks to your staff so patiently scheduling my appointments to see Doug, I am 100% improved and happy. -- Saundria A.

I have been a patient of Yonemoto Physical Therapy for a number of years. [I received] physical therapy on different occasions and for different treatments, including pool therapy and qigong classes. I have always been 100% satisfied for the treatment here by all the staff. I have been referred for therapy by different doctors and I always call on Yonemoto Therapy and recommend them to other people. -- Frances P.

Erin came to Yonemoto Physical Therapy for pain in her knee. She is a violinist and practices about one hour each day (plus lessons, etc.) standing. Her injuries are believed to

be from favoring her right knee and/or hyperextending it. After just seven sessions and training for a home exercise program, she is feeling almost 100% better! -- Carissa L. (Erin's mom)

pleased to have these knowledgeable therapists care for us. The entire staff is very warm and helpful. We couldn't be happier--I highly recommend Yonemoto. -- Anthony and Ann P.

Within the last 6 years, I have had 2 hip replacement surgeries and many back and leg problems so I have had many sessions with Yonemoto Therapy. Everyday when I go for walks and do all the normal things life requires of me I am forever grateful to Yonemoto Therapy. Yonemoto Therapy is a place where "good things happen". -- Lily Y.

I came to Yonemoto Physical Therapy after prostate cancer surgery. Sheila was very caring and positive. Her exercises helped tremendously and my incontinence after surgery is well on the road to recovery. I can recommend these therapists and their treatment procedures without hesitation. -- L. T.

After hip surgery the surgeon requested my husband of 87 be given physical therapy. Since I've been a patient at Yonemoto's for lower back problems...I asked the surgeon to allow my husband to have his physical therapy at Yonemoto's also. We are both



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Other specialties include orthopedics and sports medicine, TMJ, chronic headaches, Bell's Palsy, urinary incontinence, and low back pain from pregnancy.

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Frequently Asked Questions

to do about them.

Tendinitis and what

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Treating Tendinitis

The Challenge of

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The Challenge of Treating Tendinitis

Tendinitis



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