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PatientInformation

Achilles Tendon &

CalfMuscleStrains

The condition

- Calf Muscle Strains
- Achilles Tendon (TA) Strains and Rupture

About the condition

The calf is the most powerful muscle in the body made up of three layers of muscles. The medial and lateral heads of the Gastrocnemius, and the deeper layer the Soleus. Together they form the Triceps Surae and act to propel the body upwards in standing such as rising up onto your toes. Calf strains occur as imbalances within the group when the Gastrocnemius tightens and the Soleus weakens. Most commonly it is the medial (inside) Gastrocnemius that strains. This relates to the way our foot strikes the ground.

If the medial arch of the foot is flattened then the strain of meeting ground forces sends a counter force through the TA and calf. The impact of this in vigorous situations, such as sprinting or repeated and prolonged use, such as marathon running causes a build up of strain in the tissues of the calf and/or TA. The TA ruptures (snaps) are common in the years post forty as the body tends to loose a type of tissue called "elastin" which means the tendon has less inherent flexibility. This predisposes it to strains through to complete tears.

Usual symptoms include

- Pain in the calf and/or TA heel region
- Swelling around the TA
- Inability to point toes without pain or weakness
- Unable to raise onto toes in weight-bearing
- Walking, stairs and running are difficult
- Squatting with heels on the floor is difficult

What we can do to help

- We use massage and muscle stretches to lengthen the tight structures
- We use electrotherapy and/or acupuncture to relieve pain, swelling and promote healing of damaged tissue
- We progressively strengthen the weakened muscle by teaching you specific exercises
- We use tape or orthotics to support the heel and/or to control the foot with support to the medial arch
- We progressively return you to daily and sporting activity
- We are planning to see you about ___ times over the next ___ week(s)



Most calf strains result from imbalances between strength and length

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