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Tendon injuries

The most common tendon injuries, often referred to as tendinopathy, are:

- Upper limb rotator cuff (shoulder)
Common extensor (tennis elbow)
Common flexor (golfers elbow)
Abductor pollicis longus/extensor pollicis brevis (wrist).
- Lower limb Patella tendon (knee)
Achilles (ankle)

Tendon injuries are often overuse injuries and can affect people in all age groups.

Tendon injuries are characterised by localised pain when loaded (ie. when use or if weight-bearing). In the more severe cases local swelling may be present. If the condition becomes chronic (ie doesn't resolve within a couple of months) the area may become thickened and dysfunction may occur. People suffering from chronic tendinopathy will often have to reduce their physical activity and therefore will also suffer a potential negative effect on overall health and general well being.

Physiotherapy has an important role in returning suffering from a tendinopathy to full recreational and everyday activities.

Treatment: Consensus: the injury should be addressed with exercise therapy. Strengthening of muscles attached to the affected tendon has been shown to cause significant improvements in symptoms.

Research provides limited and conflicting evidence on the type of exercise that is superior for rehabilitation of a tendinopathy.

Eccentric loading, combined eccentric/concentric rehabilitation or heavy slow resistance (HSR) programmes have all demonstrated improvement in patient's symptoms.

HSR programmes appear to provide better results in Patella tendinopathy
Eccentric loading provides better in Achilles tendinopathy.

Any rest period should depend on the severity and duration of the injury.

One study concluded continuation of pain provoking activity following a pain monitoring model did not have a negative effect on the outcome of treatment. In all cases tendon load intensity is the key to successful rehabilitation.

Consult the Health Rooms Physiotherapy staff for expert advice and treatment. If you found this article helpful please "like and share"

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