

**Boulder Office**

5387 Manhattan Circle #200  
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**Steamboat Office**

940 Central Park Drive  
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## Achille's Tendonitis

**Definition:** The Achilles tendon is a band of tissue that connects the heel bone to the calf muscle of the lower leg. Achilles tendonitis is the term used when the tendon is inflamed. The inflammation causes pain at the back of your leg near the heel.



**Causes:**

- Overuse of the Achilles tendon
- Tight calf muscles or Achilles tendon
- Uphill running
- Increasing the amount or intensity of your activity, sometimes along with switching to shoes with flatter heels
- Over-pronation, a problem where your feet roll inward and flatten out more than normal when you walk or run
- Wearing high heels at work then switching to lower heeled shoes for exercise

**Symptoms:** Achilles tendonitis causes pain and may cause swelling over the Achilles tendon. The tendon is tender and may be swollen. You will have pain when you rise up on your toes and pain when you stretch the tendon. The range of motion of your ankle may be limited

**Treatment:**

- Put ice packs on the Achilles tendon for 15 minutes every 3 to 4 hours for the first 2 or 3 days or until the pain goes away.
- Raise your lower leg on a pillow when you are lying down.
- Take anti-inflammatory medicine as prescribed by your healthcare provider.
- Use a heel lift or shoe insert for your shoe if recommended by your health care provider.
- While you are recovering from your injury, change your sport or activity to one that does not make your condition worse. For example, you may need to swim instead of run.
- Do any exercises your healthcare provider gives you to stretch and strengthen your Achilles tendon.

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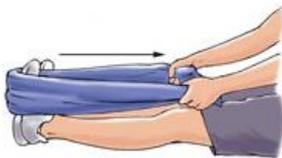
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## Achilles' Tendon Exercises

You can do the towel stretch right away. When the towel stretch is too easy, try the standing calf stretch, soleus stretch, and leg lift. When you no longer have sharp pain in your calf or tendon, you can do the step-up, heel raises, and static and dynamic balance exercises.



Towel stretch

**Towel stretch:** Sit on a hard surface with one leg stretched out in front of you. Loop a towel around your toes and the ball of your foot and pull the towel toward your body keeping your knee straight. Hold this position for 15 to 30 seconds then relax. Repeat 3 times.



Standing calf stretch

**Standing calf stretch:** Facing a wall and with your shoes on, put your hands against the wall at about eye level. Keep one leg back with the heel on the floor, and the other leg forward. Turn your back foot slightly inward (as if you were pigeon-toed) as you slowly lean into the wall until you feel a stretch in the back of your calf. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times and then switch the position of your legs and repeat the exercise 3 times. Do this exercise several times each day. Repeat this exercise with your back knee bent.

**Eccentric calf strengthening:** Tie a loop in a theraband and place the loop around your foot. Hold the other end of the theraband in your hands. Without providing any resistance through the theraband, point your toes. Pull the theraband toward you, slowly allow your foot to pull upward (toes toward you) resisting the pull of the theraband throughout the movement. Relax the pull on the theraband and point your toes again. Perform 3 sets of 10.



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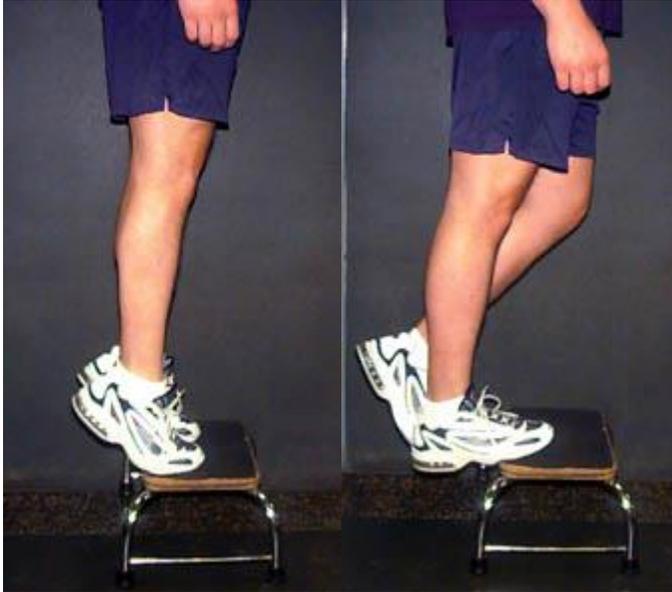
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**Heel dips:** Wear shoes for this exercise. Stand on a step and using both feet, rise up onto your toes. Lift the uninvolved leg and slowly lower yourself down on the involved leg until the ankle is fully flexed. Use both feet to again rise onto your toes. Perform 3 sets of 10.



**Core strengthening:** perform core strengthening exercises per separate handout