

Achilles Tendon Rupture

CAUSES

- An Achilles rupture is a complete or partial tear of the achilles tendon from your heel bone (calcaneus).
- The achilles tendon connects the calf muscles to the heel bone and has a role in transferring forces that allow us to walk, run and jump.
- Achilles tendon rupture is commonly caused by **sudden increase in stretch** of the **tendon** when **jumping, taking off** into a sprint or **pivoting**.



SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- **Severe pain** at the heel, likened to being kicked or stabbed
- A **popping/snapping** sensation
- **Difficulty walking** and rising onto toes
- **Swelling** at the back of the heel

WHAT ELSE COULD IT BE?

- Calf strain / tear
- Achilles Tendinopathy

ASSESSMENT & OUTCOME MEASURES

- **Assessment** of;
 - Loading & exercise and injury history.
 - Assessment of the ability to weight bear and walk
 - Specific Orthopaedic tests of the Achilles tendon
 - Palpation of heel & foot region
 - Lower limb muscular strength
 - Functional lower limb control in aggravating activities.



MANAGEMENT

- Achilles ruptures/tears can be managed both **conservatively** with immobilisation in a moon boot and gradual reintroduction to an exercise program, and **non-conservatively** with surgery.
- The decision between conservative and non-conservative management is made from a number of factors including the size of the tear, patients age, activity and functional demands, and patients health status.
- Following assessment by a physio, you may be referred onto a Sports Physician or Orthopaedic Specialist for consideration of management options.
- Whether managed conservatively or non-conservatively, physiotherapy is important to help **restore** ankle range of **movement**, muscle **strength** and functional movements.

Wertz J., Galli M., Borchers J.R. (2013). Achilles tendon rupture: risk assessment for aerial and ground athletes. Sports Health; 5(5).

Yang X., Meng H., Quan Q., Peng J., Lu S., Wang A. (2018). Management of acute achilles tendon ruptures: a review. Bone Joint Res; 7(10).

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