



the Challenge of Treating Tendinitis

by Paul Silovsky, PT

PERSONAL MESSAGE



Geert Audiens —co-owner, Avante Physical Therapy

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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.

Tissue that is initially injured goes through an inflammatory phase. This lasts anywhere from 7 to 14 days. The Physical Therapist role during this time period is to reduce the pain and swelling with various treatment aides such as ultrasound which may be used with a topical anti inflammatory medication prescribed by your doctor. Manual therapy techniques, such as friction or soft tissue massage, can be performed along with ice to aid the healing process. Education on what to do at home to continue with the reduction of pain and swelling (such as R.I.C.E or

rest, ice, compression, and elevation) for the inflamed tissue is also a part of the therapists role.

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 the isolated stress on the area and allow the inflamed tendons to recover while still being able to use it. 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 into 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.”

A tendon is soft tissue that connects a muscle to a bone. Tendonitis (inflammation of a tendon) can be caused a few different ways. One is by repeatedly causing micro trauma to the tendon fibers by ‘squashing’ it to a bony structure (impingement). Another is due to muscles constantly straining the tendon (causing tissue breakdown) when they contract or shorten. Pressure from swelling/inflammation due to tendonitis can also cause increased pressure on nerves that are close to the proximity of the injured area, causing further pain.

The most common symptoms of tendonitis 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 tendonitis are:

1. Overuse: when activity requires a high level of repetition, tendons can be injured or irritated leading to tendonitis. 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 tendonitis.



Tendonitis can occur in numerous places in the body because there are so many tendons connecting all the muscles to the bones. Following are the more common sites where tendonitis occurs:

1. This commonly involves the rotator cuff tendons or the biceps tendon. These forms of tendonitis 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 tendonitis involves the heel of the foot and the tendon attaching to it.
 5. Wrists: when affected with tendonitis, 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 and 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 it. For wrists, elbows or shoulders a sling may be helpful.

2. Ice. Apply ice or 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 effected 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:

Less than 3 Yes:

You're doing fine. Exercising may help keep your tendinitis in check.

Between 3 and 6 Yes:

Physical Therapy is an option for you.

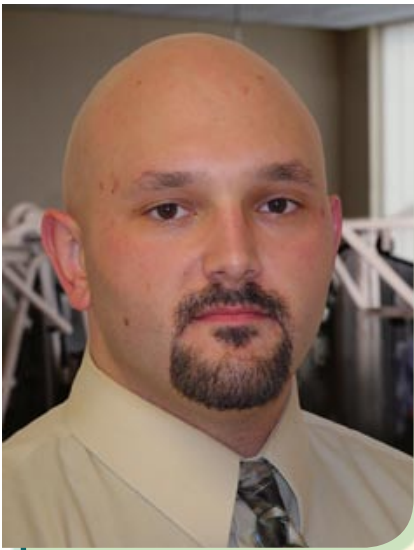
More than 6 Yes:

We would advise you to see a doctor to get a better diagnosis. PT is definitely an option.



Featured Physical Therapist

Stefan Maksymiw, DPT



Since joining our practice Stefan has treated many patients helping them regain their normal function. Stefan specializes in spinal and peripheral joint injuries. Stefan received his doctorate degree in physical therapy from the University of Buffalo in New York. He is originally from Syracuse, New York and now resides in Apex, NC. "Education of the person's condition is key to 100% reduction in symptoms. If a person does not completely understand what they are doing wrong to create the condition, then they can not achieve a full recovery."

SUCCESSES

What patients are saying . . .

Stefan was my physical therapist and he did an outstanding job, he was very thorough and understood my problem, I would recommend Stefan and Avante to everyone. ■

Stefan has been a great help to me. Thank you so much Stefan for caring and feeling my pain.

I am much improved and will recommend Avante to anyone who is in need of physical therapy. ■

Fantastic treatment, I felt that my therapist really listened and used what I told him to adjust my treatment. Stefan was always interested and made sure that I understood the exercises. ■

This was my first experient with physical therapy. In just a few weeks there was remarkable improvement in my condition.

As always an excellent experience and much improvement!!! ■

Jamie did a great job getting my knee back in shape after knee surgery. Jamie rocks!!!! ■

Andrea is a wonderful therapist. I was very satisfied with my treatment at Avante Physical Therapy and would recommend Avante to all my friends and family or anyone in need of physical therapy. ■

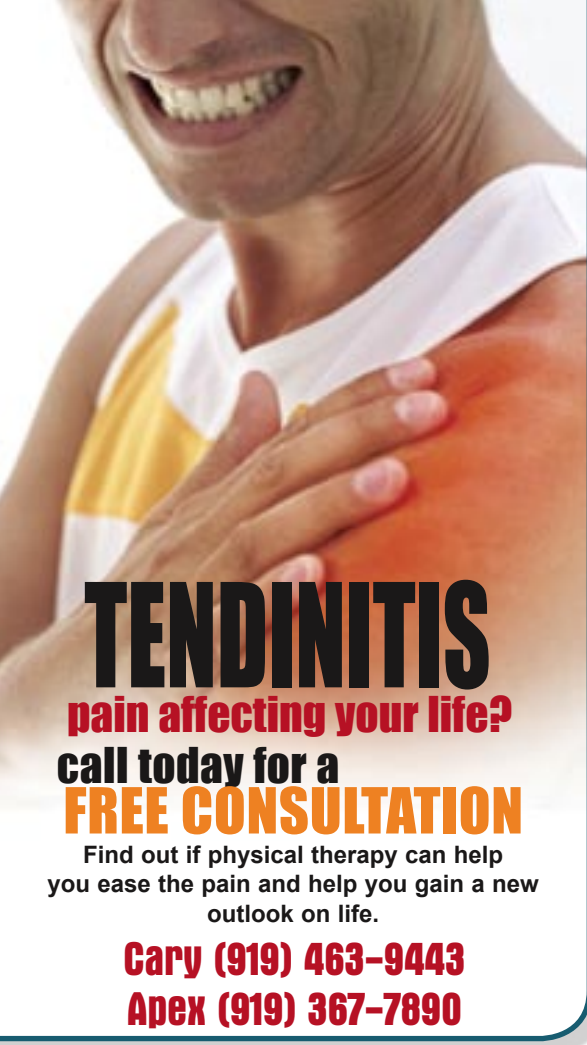
I don't think I would have recovered ass quickly as I did

without Avante Physical Therapy. I would definetly recommend Avante to everyone. ■

I never thought the pain would go away. Thank you Avante and all the staff. ■



I'm almost back to normal now! I would definetly recommend Avante to others in need of physical therapy. ■



TENDINITIS

pain affecting your life?

**call today for a
FREE CONSULTATION**

Find out if physical therapy can help you ease the pain and help you gain a new outlook on life.

Cary (919) 463-9443

Apex (919) 367-7890



What is new at Avante?

Avante welcomes a new addition to the Avante family. Olivia Sienna Reeves was born on 3/1/2007, and is the new 'play doll' for sisters Isabella and Sophia. Well done Heather (and yes Bruce, you also did a little bit!!!!).



We also would like to congratulate Jamie on receiving her Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree from UNC in December of last year. Jamie is a valued team member at Avante who continues to expand her skills on a daily basis.

Therapists Jamie and Andrea also received their Pilates MAT 1 certification in January. Congrats to the both of you.

Lastly, the major construction in front of the Cary clinic is finally done. Yippy!!!!

we care about you

Call us today at

Cary (919) 463-9443

Apex (919) 367-7890

for a free consultation

**INSIDE:
the Challenge
of Treating Tendinitis**

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