

## INSERTIONAL ACHILLES TENDON ECCENTRIC EXERCISE PROTOCOL

Achilles tendinopathy is an injury which affects the Achilles tendon's ability to withstand load. What we know nowadays is that there is no inflammation of the tendon but a breakdown in the normal structure of the tendon cells (collagen) which results with an increase in its thickness and the formation of new blood vessels. Numerous treatment options have been proposed but 'eccentric' exercises are a conservative option that has provided positive and reliable outcomes.

Here is a step by step instruction guide:

### 1. Stand on a flat surface



### 2. Rise up on tip toes on the affected side



### 3. Transfer your weight over to the affected side (stay up on your tip toes)



#### 4. Lower down on your affected side only **SLOWLY**



#### 5. Transfer the weight on your unaffected side and start following point 2.

Aim for the eccentrics to be completed twice per day every other day. Starting with 3 sets of 10 repetitions and progressing to 3 sets of 15 repetitions as pain allows.

#### What should you feel?

The exercises are aimed to strengthen the tendon and ultimately restore its ability to withstand load. As a result, you may feel an increase in your pain initially with the programme. You should still continue unless the pain becomes intolerable (>5/10), in which case you should consult with your physiotherapist to make sure the technique is optimal, and the number of sets, repetitions and load are correct.

As the matrix of the tendon gets stronger, the exercises will become easier and there will be less discomfort/pain. When this happens, you need to increase the load the same way you would do to strengthen any muscle in the body. You can do this simply by putting on a rucksack with some books in it as you do the exercises.

#### Is that all?

Try to avoid stretching your calf whilst you have your injury. Stretching can add an extra compressive load which we know may be detrimental to your tendon.

Achilles tendinopathy is a complex condition which can be treated successfully with conservative treatment. We know eccentric exercises are a good tool to manage this condition. However, your physiotherapist will have to monitor your symptoms as well as review any possible biomechanical abnormality which could alter your progress. It is important to be patient because the changes in the tendon do take time, often around three to four months.

#### **C D E**

These exercises should only be used in the Third or Degenerative Stage as implementation in any other stage. The exercises and advice offered in this leaflet should not increase your symptoms. If your symptoms worsen or stop improving, then seek appropriate medical attention.