

Achilles Tendinitis: Not a Mythical Injury

In Greek mythology, Achilles was a Greek hero during the Trojan War. However, in later legends, Achilles was invulnerable throughout his entire body, except for his heel. When he was killed by an arrow shot into his heel, the term "Achilles' heel" was created to mean a person's potential weakness. Later, medicine would adopt the name of Achilles to refer to the tendon in which Achilles received his injury.

Achilles tendinitis refers to the irritation and inflammation of the Achilles tendon. This un-mythical injury is more common in people 30-50 years of age, especially those that enjoy recreational activities. Interestingly enough, men are six times more likely to suffer from Achilles tendinitis than women. Hmm, perhaps there is a little truth in the mythology?

As more and more people become interested in sports, the increase in Achilles tendinitis has risen quickly in the past three decades. The most common sports associated with this condition include:

- Soccer
- Running
- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Tennis
- Gymnastics
- Other sports involving running and jumping

Achilles tendinitis is not an injury that just suddenly occurs one day. It is one that sets in over time due to excessive strain on the tendon. This repeated strain causes the tendon to become irritated, inflamed and may eventually cause tearing. This eventually leads to the weakening and degeneration of the tendon. If not cared for, the tendon could suddenly tear or rupture.

However, there are instances in which a sudden traumatic event can induce Achilles tendinitis. Although you might not receive an arrow to the heel like our mythological friend, you might feel as though you did when the tendon suddenly tears during a sporting event or receives sudden trauma, such as landing on the tendon from a large height.