Rethinking the Role of Exercise for Achilles Tendinopathy

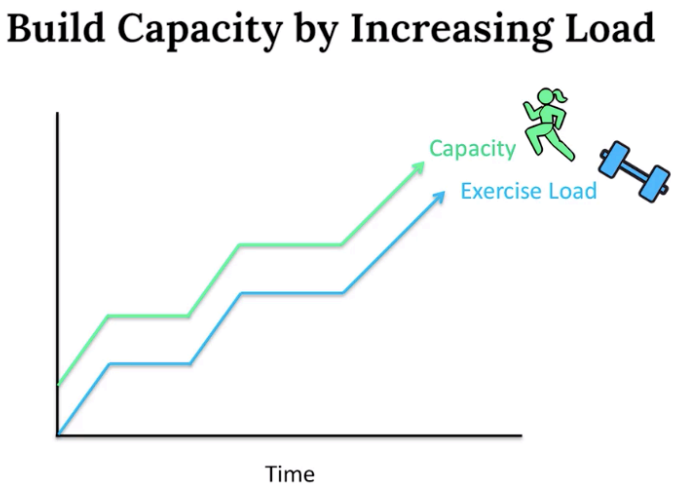
Handout for Treatment Session 1

Home Education Program - Here's the plan!

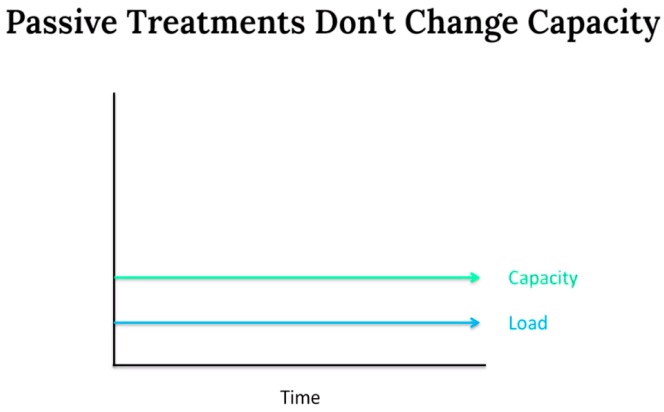
1. Watch video: Rethinking the Role of Exercise for Achilles Tendinopathy
   - https://youtu.be/oLCUNL1vdjg
2. Review this handout and jot down any questions
3. Complete review questions (check email for link OR write below)
4. Complete home exercise log

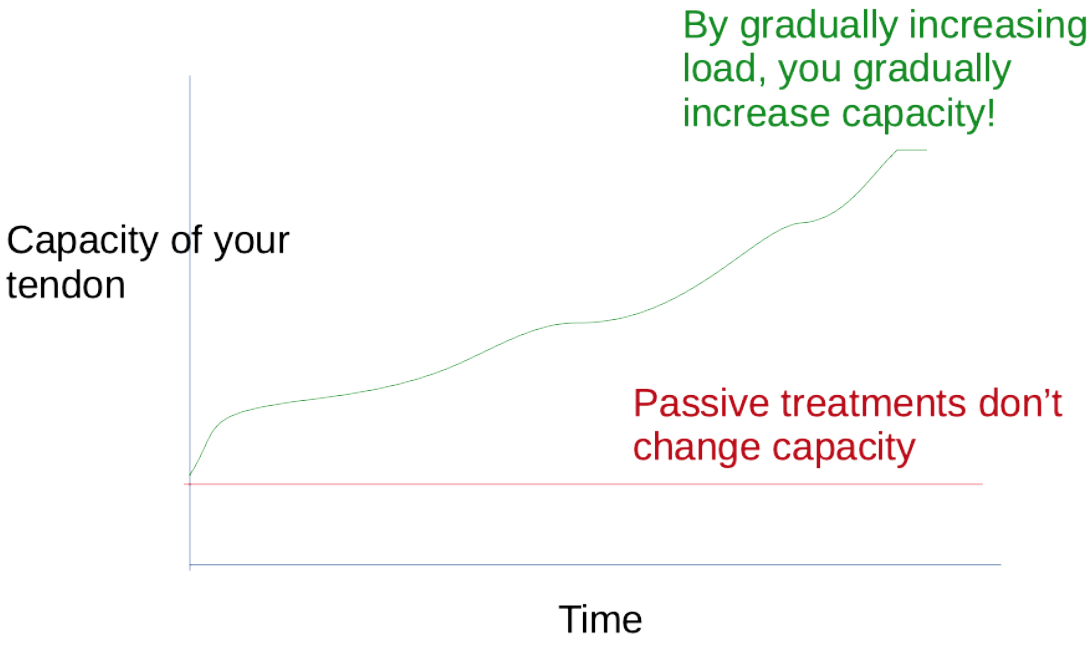
Exercise to Reduce Achilles Tendinopathy

- Goal of physical therapy = get you back to doing what you want in your daily life
- Exercise is an *active treatment* for tendinopathy
- **Increasing load on the tendon overtime improves capacity for higher levels of exercise**



- Research has found that **exercise can decrease pain and improve healing**
- *Passive treatments* do not increase load or capacity



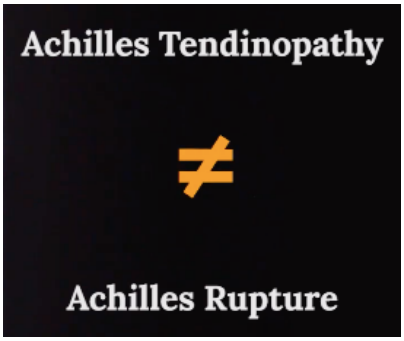


Common Beliefs about Tendinopathy and Exercise

- Tendon Stiffness Requires Stretching to Improve
  - A sense of stiffness is **not** due to a shortening of the tendon.
  - Tendons with tendinopathy **stretch more** than a healthy tendon and stretching may actually **aggravate** your tendon.
  - Exercise is one of **the best** ways to improve the stiffness in your tendon.

- Exercising and Risk of Achilles Tendon Rupture
  - Achilles tendinopathy and tendon rupture are **not the same** and require two completely different treatments.

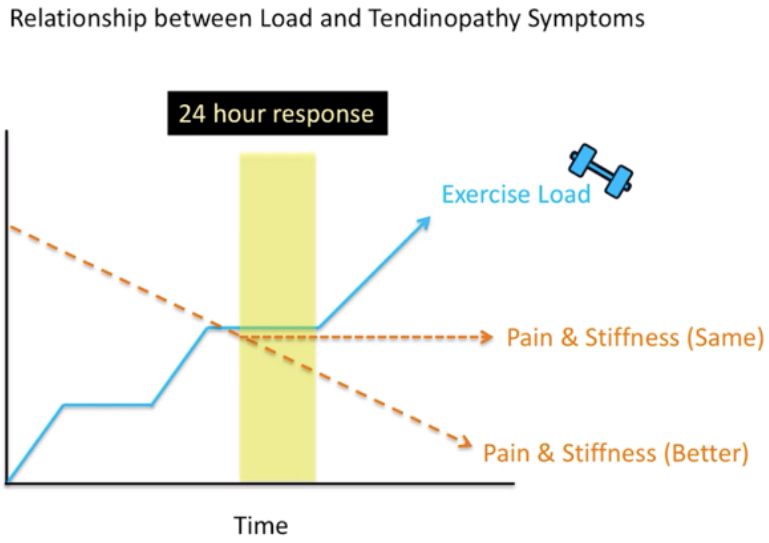
  - Achilles tendon ruptures are often never painful beforehand. To address achilles pain the best treatment is exercise.



Response to exercise

- To determine your ideal exercise intensity, **monitor how you feel after completion of exercises for 24-hours**

- The correct intensity (or load) is when symptoms:
  - Decrease OR
  - Stay the same



Review Questions

Multiple Choice Questions:

1. What is the goal of exercise for your achilles tendon and pain?
    a. Improve the tendon capacity to load
    b. Increase the flexibility of your tendon
    c. Improve calf strength to unload your tendon
    d. Make the tendon hurt more
2. What type of exercise is a good type to start with to decrease tendon pain and avoid excessive tendon load?
    a. Concentric strengthening (Lifting portion of heel raise)
    b. Isometric strengthening (Stay in one spot during heel raise)
    c. Eccentric strengthening (Slow lowering down)
    d. Hopping in place
3. How can you determine if you have completed the right amount of exercise for your achilles tendon?
    a. Increased stiffness and pain in your tendon the next day
    b. Calf tightness within the next week
    c. No change or decreased tendon pain the next day
    d. Increased swelling around your tendon
4. If your achilles tendon is painful, based on recent research, which activity is best to help heal your tendon?
    a. Rest
    b. Massage
    c. Stretching
    d. Exercise suited to your tolerance
5. Tendon stiffness is a common complaint with achilles tendinopathy. What is the best activity to reduce this sensation of achilles stiffness?
    a. Rest
    b. Stretch your calf muscle
    c. Exercise with isometrics and heel-raises
    d. Ice or heat
6. Low and stable achilles tendon pain during exercise means that my tendon will rupture?
    a. Yes, any pain indicates high risk for severe tendon injury
    b. Yes, most achilles ruptures have chronic tendon pain prior
    c. No, you can always ignore pain with achilles tendon exercises
    d. No, chronic achilles tendon pain is rarely linked to tendon rupture

Short Response Questions:

Please list 3-5 activities that you are currently have difficulty completing and provide a value related to the difficulty you have completing that activity.

0 = unable to perform and 10 = able to complete with no problem.

What exercises and/or activities help decrease your Achilles tendon pain and stiffness?

Exercise Log

Your goals for home exercise until your next visit include:

- Isometrics: _____
- Heel-lifts: _____
- Spring-phase: _____
- Other: _____

Day 1
Type of isometric exercise performed (circle)

1. Sitting Bilateral
2. Body-weight Bilateral
3. Body-weight Unilateral
4. Machine-weighted Unilateral

Number of sets performed (0 to 5)_____
Duration of isometric hold (0 to 45 s)_____

Day 2
Type of isometric exercise performed (circle)

1. Sitting Bilateral
2. Body-weight Bilateral
3. Body-weight Unilateral
4. Machine-weighted Unilateral

Number of sets performed (0 to 5)_____
Duration of isometric hold (0 to 45 s)_____

Day 3
Type of isometric exercise performed (circle)

1. Sitting Bilateral
2. Body-weight Bilateral
3. Body-weight Unilateral
4. Machine-weighted Unilateral

Number of sets performed (0 to 5)_____
Duration of isometric hold (0 to 45 s)_____

Day 4
Type of isometric exercise performed (circle)

1. Sitting Bilateral
2. Body-weight Bilateral
3. Body-weight Unilateral
4. Machine-weighted Unilateral

Number of sets performed (0 to 5)_____

Duration of isometric hold (0 to 45 s)_____

Day 5
Type of isometric exercise performed (circle)
1. Sitting Bilateral
2. Body-weight Bilateral
3. Body-weight Unilateral
4. Machine-weighted Unilateral

Number of sets performed (0 to 5)_____
Duration of isometric hold (0 to 45 s)_____

Day 6
Type of isometric exercise performed (circle)
1. Sitting Bilateral
2. Body-weight Bilateral
3. Body-weight Unilateral
4. Machine-weighted Unilateral

Number of sets performed (0 to 5)_____
Duration of isometric hold (0 to 45 s)_____

Day 7
Type of isometric exercise performed (circle)
1. Sitting Bilateral
2. Body-weight Bilateral
3. Body-weight Unilateral
4. Machine-weighted Unilateral

Number of sets performed (0 to 5)_____
Duration of isometric hold (0 to 45 s)_____

**Please use additional exercise logs as needed at end of folder*