

10 THINGS *NOT* TO DO FOR LOWER LIMB TENDON PAIN

Reference: by Jill Cook, La Trobe University blog: <https://bit.ly/1SPp1sn>

1. REST COMPLETELY

The old adage of use it or lose it applies to tendons, resting just decreases the ability of the tendon to take load

2. HAVE PASSIVE TREATMENTS

Treatments that do not address the need to increase the ability of the tendons to take load are not usually helpful in the long term, although they might give short term pain relief

3. HAVE INJECTION THERAPIES

Injections of substances into a tendon have not been shown to be effective in good clinical trials. Do not have an injection in tendon unless the tendon has not responded to a good exercise based program

4. IGNORE YOUR PAIN

Manage the load on your tendon, pain is a way of telling you that the load is too much. Reduce the aspects of training that are overloading your tendon (see point 10)

5. STRETCH YOUR TENDON

Aside from the load on your tendon when you play sport, there are compressive loads on your tendon when its at its longest length. Adding stretching to most tendons only serves to add compressive loads that we know are detrimental to the tendon

6. MASSAGE YOUR TENDON

A tendon that is painful is one that's telling you that it is overloaded and irritated, therefore adding further insult by massaging it can actually increase your pain

7. BE WORRIED ABOUT THE IMAGE OF YOUR TENDON

The pictures of your tendon with ultrasound and MRI can frighten you, and the words used by doctors such as degeneration and tears can make you wonder if your tendon should be loaded. There is good evidence that the pathological tendon can tolerate loads, especially when you gradually increase the loads on them

8. BE WORRIED ABOUT RUPTURE

Pain is protective of your tendon, it makes you unload it. In fact most people who rupture a tendon never had pain before, despite the tendon having substantial pathology (see point 7)

9. TAKE SHORT CUTS WITH REHAB

Taking short cuts with rehab do not work, you need to take the time that the tendon needs to build its strength and capacity. Although this can be a substantial period (up to 3 months or longer), the long term outcomes are good if you do the correct rehab

10. NOT HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT LOADS ARE HIGH FOR YOUR TENDON

The highest load on your tendon is when you use it like a spring, such as jumping, change of direction and sprinting. Any loads that do not use these movements are low load for a tendon, so exercises using weights and exercise that is slow will not place a high load on the tendon, although they can certainly have a beneficial effect on the muscles

The take home message is that exercise-based rehab is the best treatment for tendon pain. A progressive program that starts with a strength program and progresses through to more spring like exercises and including endurance aspects will give the right loads on the tendon and the best long term results.

