

Tendinopathy Cheat Sheet

1. What is Tendinopathy?

Tendinopathy refers to the breakdown and injury of tendons, typically from overuse or repetitive stress. It's a broad term encompassing both **tendinitis** (inflammation of the tendon) and **tendinosis** (chronic tendon degeneration without inflammation).

2. Key Symptoms

- Pain, especially with movement or load.
- Stiffness, often worse in the morning.
- Swelling or thickening of the tendon.
- Reduced strength or function in the affected area.

3. Common Areas Affected

- Achilles tendon (back of the heel)
- Patellar tendon (front of the knee)
- Rotator cuff tendons (shoulder)
- Elbow tendons (e.g., golf or tennis elbow)

4. Causes

- Overuse or repetitive strain: Activities like running, jumping, or lifting.
- Biomechanical factors: Poor form, improper shoes, or muscle imbalances.
- Aging: Tendons lose elasticity with age, making them more prone to injury.
- Sudden increase in load: Rapid changes in training intensity or volume.

5. Treatment Principles

- **Load management:** Adjusting the intensity and volume of activity to allow tendon recovery.
- **Progressive strengthening:** The goal is to increase the resilience and functional capacity of your tendon so it can do more work with less symptoms.
- **Shockwave therapy:** Sometimes used to stimulate tendon repair. Ask your doctor if you are appropriate for this intervention.
- **Anti-inflammatory strategies:** Initially for tendinitis (not for tendinosis, as inflammation is absent there).
- **Tendon injections:** Corticosteroid or platelet-rich plasma (PRP) injections may be used in some cases.

6. Recovery Outlook

- Tendinopathy can be slow to heal, often taking weeks to months. Early recognition and appropriate management are crucial to avoid chronic issues.

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