

Flexor Hallucis Tendon Injury

The flexor hallucis muscle is a muscle that bends your big toe. The tendon of this muscle attaches to your big toe bone. Whenever the flexor hallucis muscle contracts or gets stretched, tension is placed throughout the tendon. If the tension becomes too much from excessive repetition or force, damage to the tendon can occur. Flexor hallucis tendon injuries are classified by damage to the tendons with inflammation and degeneration.

The injury can occur from an excessive amount of force radiating through the tendon beyond what it is capable of being able to withstand, as well as that of common wear and tear that is attributed to overuse. Ballet dancers spending a significant amount of time on their toes are prone to this condition.

Flexor Hallucis Tendon Injury Anatomy

The flexor hallucis muscle comes from the back part of the outer leg bone (fibula) and travels down the inside part of the lower leg and the ankle where it is inserted into the base of the big toe through the flexor hallucis tendon. The flexor hallucis muscle is solely responsible for being able to bend the big toe. It also works to point the ankle and foot downward, aids in rising onto the toes and being able to maintain the arch within your foot.

How to Treat Flexor Hallucis Tendon Injuries:

1. Physiotherapy

Most of those who have flexor hallucis tendon injuries tend to heal well with a proper physiotherapy program. Treatments such as ultrasound, LASER, acupuncture, soft tissue massage, and deep friction techniques can ease symptoms considerably. For the program to be successful, the patient has to be dedicated to doing what is asked of them. Graduated strength, flexibility and balance programs will help to ensure you will achieve the best possible outcome.



2. Rest

One of the main components to the recovery process is to rest adequately and refrain from any activities that increase pain until such time as the symptoms are gone. In rare or severe circumstances, crutches might be needed to help rest the tendon and allow it to recover. The body will be able to begin the healing process without having to worry about damaging the tissues further. Once all of the activities can be performed without pain, you can gradually return to your regular regimen as long as the symptoms don't increase.

3. Anti-Inflammatory Medication

Using an anti-inflammatory medication can help to alleviate pain and inflammation of the tendon and muscle. Once the swelling subsides, the pain will tend to lessen and the healing process can begin.

4. Ice

Apply ice to the area for five to 10 minutes at a time, three to five times per day. The ice will help to minimize the swelling in the affected tendon. Contrast bathing can also be useful, and a good way to do this is to use an ice-pack on the foot/big toe followed by a bath or hot shower.

Tips:

- Return slowly and gradually to your regular daily activities to prevent causing further injury to the site.
- Using crutches might prove beneficial to help alleviate any excess strain and pressure on the injured tendon.
- Try incorporating exercises to help improve flexibility, strength and balance into your daily life to help restore muscle strength.
- Stretching and warming up properly before participating in an exercise regimen is important.
- Use ice and heat to help minimize swelling and help alleviate some of the tension in your tendon.