



I love it when the sun shines and it finally gets warm enough to get back into a pair of sandals. The down side to that is that sandals and flip-flops tend to irritate my sensitive achilles tendonitis. I was at a course recently and have completely solved this problem for myself.....read on.

## TIPS FOR THE SEASON AHEAD

### TENDONITIS

Tendonitis, the name is no longer in use due to the fact that there are no outward signs of inflammation (other than pain). As well, recent researchers have failed to find any inflammatory cells at the site of injury making the term tendonitis a misnomer as there is no "itis" or inflammation present. We now use the term tendonopathy.

Rather than inflammation, what has been discovered is a disruption and irregular formation of collagen fibers which is the main type of cellular structure found in tendons. Researchers have also found an abnormal influx of new blood vessels and local sensory nerve fibres, which is associated with the pain. This has been found in tendonopathies all over the body, including among others tennis elbow, golfers elbow, wrist and thumb and plantar fasciitis.

Having suffered multiple bouts of achilles tendonopathy, I can identify with sufferers of this condition more than most, and know that while the injury seems fairly minor in the grand scheme of things, it often prevents us from comfortably enjoying some of our favorite activities, making life that much less enjoyable.

The fact that biopsies of affected tendons found no signs of inflammation, may help to explain why previous methods of treatment have such variable results. Physiotherapy modalities such as ultrasound and electrical stimulation may give short term relief, but hold little value in the long term recovery. Cortisone shots will decrease inflammation (now known not to be present in the first place) but will also leave the tissues in a weakened condition.

It makes sense that we would want to increase the strength of the tendon through progressive overload, thus allowing return to previous levels of function without a recurrence of injury. However, in many cases the injury comes about due to overloading the tendon. Rest, while allowing the tissues to heal, unfortunately would cause the tissues to weaken making them prone

to re-injury. That is the sum of the catch-22 situation, how to overload the tendon to increase strength while at the same time allowing the damaged tissue to heal. The key to this conundrum is eccentric exercise. Eccentric exercises are ones in which the muscle is working to decelerate a motion. This means that the tendon is being stretched while the muscle attached to it is lengthening and contracting at the same time. This type of muscle action occurs for example when going down stairs. The quad (thigh muscle) has to lengthen and contract at the same time, otherwise you would fall down the stairs. Ask your physiotherapist how to go about eccentrically loading your irritated tendons or have your trainer add some eccentric loading into your gym program as a preventative measure. On a side note, another interesting bit of research that has come out recently is the discovery of the gene that predisposes people to developing tendonopathy, so you are not imagining it if you go from dealing with a tennis elbow to an achilles tendonopathy to a rotator cuff injury. I suspect if you are one of these people, a preventative eccentric gym program may be the key.



Heel Drop Exercise for Achillies Tendonopathy

## CLINIC HAPPENINGS:

I would like to welcome Siobhan Ni Cheidigh to the clinic. Siobhan will be doing our summer vacations from now until the end of October and may stay beyond. She comes to us from Ireland and has been working in Vancouver for three years.

I mentioned in the last newsletter a fee increase largely associated with the HST. I had a few questions regarding this. This increase covers a 3% increase in costs directly associated with the HST and also accounts for a large rent increase we have had with the renewal of our lease this year. In addition we have seen an increase across the board of about 5% from our suppliers. Even with this increase, we remain very competitive and continue to provide a service that (in our opinion) is unmatched.

Physio Schedule as at February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7:00						
8:00						
9:00		Allison	Byron	Allison	Lynn	
10:00	Linda Warren	Barb	Barb	Byron	Linda Warren	
11:00	Kerry	Lynda Lawrence	Byron	Lynda Lawrence	Linda Warren	Sarah
12:00		Shahab	Lynn	Shahab	Shahab	Andrew
13:00			Linda Warren	Linda Warren		Shahab
14:00		Linda Warren	Byron	Andrew	Sarah	
15:00		Byron	Sarah	Lynn	Byron	
16:00		Allison	Linda Warren	Sarah	Andrew	
17:00		Lynn	Byron	Lynn		
18:00	Kerry	Byron				
19:00						