

Patient Information Sheet

Achilles Tendon Tear

What do I need to know?

What is my diagnosis?

You have ruptured your achilles tendon – this is the main tendon that runs down the back of your leg to your heel. When it is torn you cannot stand on your tip toes.



What happens next?

- The tendon will heal by itself as long as it is supported in a special boot that raises the heel to bring the ends of the tendon together
- The boot should be worn day and night and should not be removed until you are seen in clinic.
- You will be sent an appointment to the Orthopaedic clinic within **2 weeks of injury**.

What can I expect during my recovery?

Weeks 1-8: Ankle supported by boot

- The back of your ankle/calf will be painful but simple painkillers will help
- Crutches will be useful for stability when walking
- You are allowed to put your full weight through the injured leg
- You will be given a blood thinning injection to limit the chance of clots in the leg
- You will be instructed on how to modify the boot to maximise healing but in general:
 - **Weeks 1-4:** There are 4 wedges in the boot
 - **Weeks 5 & 6:** 2 of the 4 wedges will be removed from your boot
 - **Weeks 7 & 8:** The last 2 wedges are removed so the foot is flat on the ground.

Week 9 onwards: boot removed and physiotherapy started

- The boot is removed after 8 weeks
- The blood thinning injections stop
- You will start physiotherapy to strengthen the calf
- There is **no specific time you can drive again**. It is **illegal** to drive when wearing a sling, splint, cast or moonboot. As you recover, it is your legal responsibility to be certain before you return to driving that you are able to control your vehicle normally and safely.

Patient Information Sheet

Achilles Tendon Tear

What do I need to know?



What if my tendon does not heal?

- Almost all Achilles tendon tears heal, and patients return to all work and sporting activities.
- Occasionally the tendon does not heal correctly. If this happens you will be given advice from your Orthopaedic Consultant.

Top tips

- Elevate your leg above the level of your heart when you are at home to reduce swelling
- Keep your boot completely dry. If you suspect the skin on your heel is rubbing or sore, please call the advice line number
- Please use the QR code below to view a video on how to manage your boot.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=3AQ4Uo-wWRo>

Get in touch

Please get in touch via our trauma email if you have any queries about your injury:

traumaenquiriesRIE@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Helpline Monday-Friday (8am – 4pm): 0131 242 3410

Urgent issues

Please call the department where you were initially seen about your injury:

- **RIE Minor Injuries Unit:** 0131 242 3942 (8am – midnight, if after midnight contact RIE Emergency Department 0131 242 1300)
- **WGH Minor Injuries Clinic:** 0131 537 3468 (9am – 8.30pm)
- **SIH Emergency Department:** 01506 523 011 (24 hours)

V2.1 approved by NHS Lothian Patient Information Team: June 2025

Review date: June 2028