

**Tendinitis/tendonitis** - inflammation of a tendon, usually the result of repetitive movements.

- Tendon - a band of dense, tough, inelastic, fibrous tissue that connects muscle to bone.
- ‘Tendinopathy’ - is a generic descriptor of the clinical condition (both pain and pathological characteristics) associated with overuse in and around tendons.
- ‘Tendinosis’ - (a degenerative pathological condition without inflammatory change).

**Symptoms:** Pain is often described as dull, but can become sharp/stabbing when moving the affected limb or joint. Tenderness at the site of the tendon and surrounding areas is usually present. Mild swelling may be observed as well.

### **How is it diagnosed?**

A thorough patient history and physical examination can lead towards the diagnosis of tendonitis. X-rays are typically negative unless significant swelling is present. MRI is confirmatory in moderate to severe cases. Most patients actually present with tendinopathy/tendinosis vs. tendinitis.

Tendinopathy/tendinosis occurs when a tendon fails to heal properly. Pain typically only begins to occur when the degenerative process is advanced.

**How is it treated?** Tendinopathies can occur in any tendon, but occur more frequently in the:

- elbow (medial and lateral epicondylitis)
- knee (patellar tendonitis)
- shoulder (rotator cuff tendonitis)
- thumb (Dequervain’s tendonitis)
- hip (iliopsoas tendonitis)
- foot and ankle (achilles or peroneal tendonitis).

True tendonitis treatment resembles that of a muscle strain and may include: rest, ice, compression, elevation (R.I.C.E.), massage, pulsed ultrasound, electrical muscle stimulation, cold laser therapy, and anti-inflammatory supplements.

Conservative care of tendinopathies includes: appropriate rest, ice, heat, continuous ultrasound, cold laser treatment, cross-friction massage, and exercise (especially eccentric-type exercise).

### **Alternative treatments.**

NSAID’s, muscle relaxants, narcotic pain relievers, injection therapy (corticosteroids, PRP, prolotherapy), shock wave therapy, surgery.

**Prognosis** is good for tendonitis, and fair for tendonopathy/tendinosis.

If true tendonitis is diagnosed and treated promptly, complete resolution can be expected within a couple weeks up to a couple months. Jobs that require heavy forces and repetitive movements delay recovery.

Tendonosis is a degenerative condition which will take longer to completely heal, usually within 3 to 6 months. After that, surgical intervention may be indicated.

**Duration of care:** *Approximately* 3 timers per week for 4 weeks for a total of 12 visits in the first month. The treatment plan varies greatly depending on the degree of tendon damage present and compliance to at home self-care instructions.