

# PERONEAL TENDON STRAIN

## What is a peroneal tendon strain?

A strain is an injury in which muscle fibers or tendons are stretched or torn. The peroneal muscles are on the outer side of the lower leg and their tendons attach to the foot. These muscles and tendons help move your foot to the outside.

## How does it occur?

During an injury when the foot and ankle are rolled inward, a movement called inversion, the peroneal tendons may be stretched or torn. They also may be injured when your foot is forced upward toward your shin. Peroneal tendon strain can result from running on sloped surfaces or running in shoes with excessive wear on the outside of the heel.

## What are the symptoms?

You have pain on the outer side of your lower leg and ankle. You may hear a pop or a snap when the injury occurs. You may have swelling around your ankle.

## How is it diagnosed?

Your healthcare provider will examine your ankle and lower leg. He or she will move your ankle and leg to test these tendons. X-rays may be taken to see if there is a break in your ankle or in one of the bones in your feet.

## How is it treated?

Treatment may include:

- applying ice packs to your ankle for 20 to 30 minutes every 3 to 4 hours for 2 or 3 days or until the pain goes away
- elevating your ankle to help the swelling go away by lying down and placing your foot and ankle on a pillow
- wrapping an elastic bandage around your ankle to help keep the swelling down
- wearing a stirrup splint (called an Aircast or Gelcast) or a lace-up ankle brace as prescribed by your healthcare provider
- doing exercises to strengthen your peroneal muscles and tendons and to strengthen your ankle joint

While you are recovering from your injury, you will need to change your sport or activity to one that will not make your condition worse. For example, you may need to bicycle or swim instead of run.

## When can I return to my sport or activity?

The goal of rehabilitation is to return you to your sport or activity as soon as is safely possible. If you return too soon you may worsen your injury, which could lead to permanent damage. Everyone recovers from injury at a different rate. Return to your sport or activity will be determined by how soon your tendon recovers, not by how many days or weeks it has been since your injury occurred. In general, the longer you have symptoms before you start treatment, the longer it will take to get better.

You may safely return to your sport or activity when, starting from the top of the list and progressing to the end, each of the following is true:

- You have full range of motion in the injured leg compared to the uninjured leg.
- You have full strength of the injured leg compared to the uninjured leg.
- You can jog straight ahead without pain or limping.
- You can sprint straight ahead without pain or limping.
- You can do 45-degree cuts, first at half-speed, then at full-speed.
- You can do 20-yard figures-of-eight, first at half-speed, then at full-speed.
- You can do 90-degree cuts, first at half-speed, then at full-speed.
- You can do 10-yard figures-of-eight, first at half-speed, then at full-speed.
- You can jump on both legs without pain and you can jump on the injured leg without pain.

## How can I prevent a peroneal tendon strain?

- Keep your ankles and peroneal muscles strong.
- Wear high-top athletic shoes or a supportive ankle brace.

## PERONEAL TENDON STRAIN



## PERONEAL TENDON STRAIN (continued)

- Warm up properly before starting your sport or activity.

- When running, choose level surfaces and avoid rocks or holes.

## PERONEAL TENDON STRAIN REHABILITATION EXERCISES

You may start these exercises when you can stand comfortably on your injured leg with your heel resting on the floor and your full weight evenly distributed on both legs.

- 1. TOWEL STRETCH:** Sit on a hard surface with one leg stretched out in front of you. Loop a towel around the ball of your foot and pull the towel toward your body keeping your knee straight. Hold this position for 15 to 30 seconds then relax. Repeat 3 times.



TOWEL STRETCH

When you don't feel much of a stretch using the towel, you can start the standing calf stretch.



STANDING CALF STRETCH

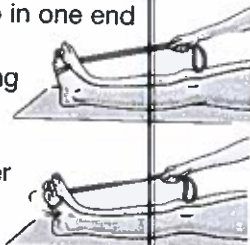
- 2. STANDING CALF STRETCH:** Facing a wall, put your hands against the wall at about eye level. Keep one leg back with the heel on the floor, and the other leg forward. Turn your back foot slightly inward (as if you were pigeon-toed) as you slowly lean into the wall until you feel a stretch in the back of your calf. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times. Do this exercise several times each day.



STANDING SOLEUS STRETCH

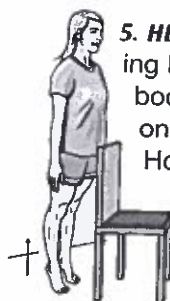
- 3. STANDING SOLEUS STRETCH:** Stand facing a wall with your hands on a wall at about chest level. With both knees slightly bent and one foot back, gently lean into the wall until you feel a stretch in your lower calf. Angle the toes of your back foot slightly inward and keep your heel down on the floor. Hold this for 15 to 30 seconds. Return to the starting position. Repeat 3 times.

- 4. RESISTED ANKLE EVERSION:** Sit with both legs stretched out in front of you, with your feet about a shoulder's width apart. Tie a loop in one end of elastic tubing. Put one foot through the loop so that the tubing goes around the arch of that foot and wraps around the outside of the other foot. Hold onto the other end of the tubing with your hand to provide tension. Turn the foot with the tubing up and out.



RESISTED ANKLE EVERSION

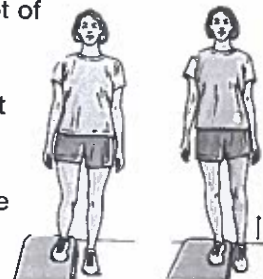
Make sure you keep your other foot still so that it will allow the tubing to stretch as you move your foot with the tubing. Return to the starting position. Do 3 sets of 10.



HEEL RAISE

- 5. HEEL RAISE:** Balance yourself while standing behind a chair or counter. Raise your body up onto your toes and hold for 5 seconds. Then slowly lower yourself down. Hold onto the chair or counter if you need to. When this exercise becomes less painful, try lowering on one leg only. Repeat 10 times. Do 3 sets of 10.

- 6. STEP-UP:** Stand with the foot of one leg on a support (like a block of wood) 3 to 5 inches high. Keep your other foot flat on the floor. Shift your weight onto the leg on the support and straighten the knee as the other leg comes off the floor. Lower your leg back to the floor slowly. Do 3 sets of 10.



STEP-UP

### 7. BALANCE AND REACH EXERCISES

Stand upright next to a chair. This will provide you with balance if needed. Stand on the foot farthest from the chair. Try to raise the arch of your foot while keeping your toes on the floor.

- A. Keep your foot in this position and reach forward in front of you with your hand farthest away from the chair, allowing your knee to bend. Repeat this 10 times while maintaining the arch height. This exercise can be made more difficult by reaching farther in front of you. Do 2 sets.
- B. Stand in the same position as above. While maintaining your arch height, reach the hand farthest away from the chair across your body toward the chair. The farther you reach, the more challenging the exercise. Do 2 sets of 10.

