



DANIEL A. CLEARFIELD, DO, MS, FAOASM
SPORTS MEDICINE & NON-OPERATIVE ORTHOPEDICS
OSTEOPATHIC MANIPULATIVE MEDICINE
REGENERATIVE MEDICINE
CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT
(817) 900-3539
WWW.MOTIONISMEDICINEDFW.COM

Ligament/Tendon Insertion Injections

What causes ligament and tendon insertional issues?

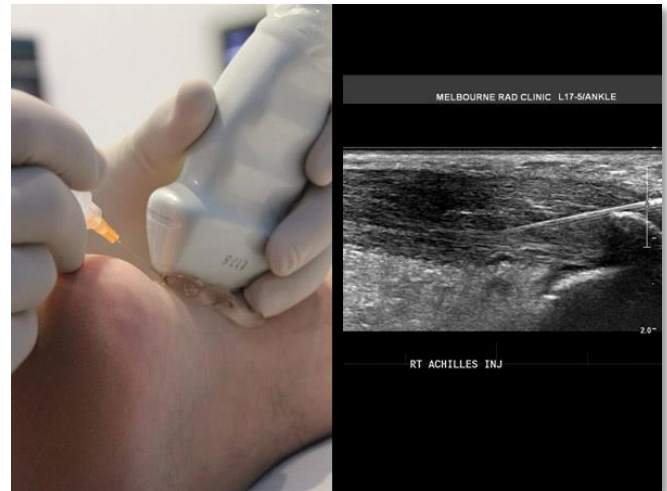
When you initially injure a tendon or ligament you get tendinitis or enthesitis, respectively, it is inflammatory (the *-itis*). Typically, the body will create an inflammatory healing cascade to heal this injury. Ligaments and tendons have poor blood supply, and as a result, the healing factors that a body part needs to heal are not fully available to ligaments or tendons. With injury, sometimes the ligaments and tendons do not heal properly leading to a chronic pain and dysfunction.

How are chronic ligament/tendon insertional issues treated?

Exercise is always the best medicine! By doing proper exercise, including stretching and strengthening, often times this can help stimulate the body's healing response to repair the area. Sometimes working with a physical therapist skilled in treating the area/condition can help heal the area. Physical therapists can perform additional modalities to help the healing including eccentric based exercises, soft tissue manipulation (ASTYM and/or Graston), and dry needling. If the injury is resistant to these more conservative treatments then ligament/tendon insertion injections are an effective treatment.

What are ligament/tendon insertion injections?

With ligament or tendon insertion injections, a needle is used to break up the chronic scar tissue. This creates microdamage at the ligament or tendon level and it helps bring healing factors to the chronic injury. This helps stimulate new healing to the area. The area is numbed with anesthetic prior to the procedure to minimize discomfort. This procedure works best if the patient abstains from taking NSAIDs (ie: Advil or Motrin (ibuprofen), Aleve (naproxen), and aspirin (Bayer)) a week before and 10 days after (as inflammation is part of the healing process).



Are there any adverse effects?

Adverse effects include bruising, bleeding, pain during and after treatment. It has a very small risk of infection and less side effects than a common corticosteroid injection.

What do I do after the procedure?

After the procedure, there might be some inflammation after the anesthetic wears off; this should resolve in a day or two. It is recommended to take it easy on the area for 1-2 days then resume full activity thereafter.

How often is the procedure performed?

In most cases, the procedure only needs to be done once. A follow-up is done in 2-3 weeks to reevaluate.

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