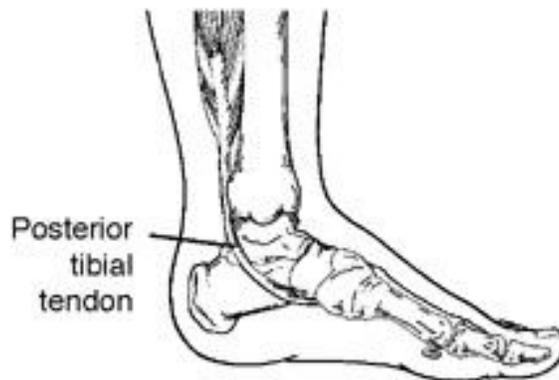


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Tibialis posterior dysfunction/ Tendonopathy

Tibialis posterior dysfunction is an inflammation and/or overstretching of the tibialis posterior tendon in the foot. An important function of this tendon is to help support the arch of the foot. However in tibialis posterior dysfunction, the tendon's ability to perform that job is impaired, often resulting in a flattening of the foot. The collapse of the arch can lead to heel pain, arch pain, plantar fasciitis and/or heel spurs. Pain will be more severe upon weight bearing, especially while walking or running. It can even cause knee, hip and back pain due to changes in gait.



The tibialis posterior tendon extends from the tibialis posterior muscle in the leg. It descends the lower leg and runs along the inside of the ankle, down the side of the foot, and into the arch. This tendon serves as one of the major supporting structures of the foot and helps the foot to function while walking.

Signs & Symptoms

- Often characterized by inflammation/swelling of the tendon.
- Pain on the inside of the ankle and foot.
- Flattening of the arch of the foot
- Inward rolling of the ankle
- In some severe cases, the inflammation may actually cause the tendon to rupture, causing a very identifiable flat foot. This is very rare.

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Causes & Risk Factors

- Overuse and strain of the tibialis posterior tendon.
- Poor foot mechanics and flat feet may lead to tibialis posterior tendon dysfunction.
- Stiff first ray (Big Toe)
- Stiff ankle joint
- In its initial stages, inflammation caused by tibialis posterior dysfunction usually comes and goes rapidly. Over time, though, the condition worsens and the tendon will degenerate.

Physiotherapy treatment may include

- Biomechanical lower limb and foot analysis
- Electrotherapy in acute stages
- Cryotherapy – ice for 10 mins on a regular basis
- Release to tight muscles and soft tissue structures
- Acupuncture
- Functional and eccentric strengthening program
- Taping- to support the arch
- Possible orthotics prescription to control poor foot mechanics.
- Assessment of lumbar spine and sacroiliac joint to eliminate referred pain
- Usually the healing process will take 4-6 weeks to settle
- Graded return to weight bearing exercise
- In severe cases a Walker/Moon boot may be indicated
- In the case of a severe tendinopathy, surgery may be indicated.

Differential Diagnosis

- Achilles Tendon injury
- Calf Strain
- Ankle injury – ligamentous or impingement
- Planta Fasciitis
- Bruised heel
- Nerve entrapment syndrome
- Lumbar-Sacral nerve irritation

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