

Tibialis posterior tendon dysfunction self-management guide

Information for patients



If any of the advice given in this leaflet makes your symptoms worse or creates a new pain, please stop and seek advice.

Podiatry telephone number: **0131 536 1627**

What is Tibialis Posterior Tendon Dysfunction?

The tibialis posterior tendon is one of the major supporting structures of the foot. Tibialis posterior tendon dysfunction is a progressive condition caused by changes in the tendon, affecting the ability to support the arch. This results in flattening of the foot.

Causes

Tibialis posterior tendon dysfunction (TPTD) is most commonly caused by gradual wear and tear of the tendon, which can lead to the arch flattening. As the arch flattens, there is more stress and strain placed on the tendon and the ligaments in the arch of the foot.

Tibialis posterior tendon dysfunction is more common in women and in people older than 40 years of age. Additional risk factors include obesity, diabetes, and hypertension.

Signs and symptoms

- Pain and swelling along the inside of the foot and ankle
- Pain that worsens with activity. High-intensity or high-impact activities can be very difficult
- Pain when walking or standing for long periods of time
- Difficulty and pain when standing on tip toes
- Noticeable change to the shape of the foot- flattening of the arch and inward rolling of the ankle
- Pain on the outside of the ankle. When the foot collapses, the heel bone may shift to an outwards position. This can put pressure on the outside ankle bone
- In severe cases, arthritis may also develop.

What can I do to help myself?

It is important to try to work out what leads to your pain. Avoiding the causes or triggers of painful symptoms is one of the most important parts of helping your recovery.

Consider the following options:

Patience

This is not always easy but we know it may take a significant period of time for symptoms to settle.

Ice packs

Apply an ice pack to the most painful site for 20 minutes 2-3 times daily (ensure the ice is not applied directly to your skin- a cloth may be a useful barrier).

Modify activity levels

You may benefit from considering a period of rest from specific activities, reducing your activity levels, and/or engaging in alternative activities temporarily.

Aim for a healthy body weight

Being overweight increases strain to the affected area and could reduce your chances of successful resolution. If you need support with this, please speak with your GP or the Get Moving Service.

Medication

Use medication such as paracetamol and or anti-inflammatory medicines. Discuss this with your Pharmacist or GP.

Footwear

Shoe styles with semi-rigid soles are preferable and should accommodate the width and shape of your foot. Avoid narrow, pointed shoes. The heel height should be between 1cm and 4 cm.

Exercises

These will be carefully tailored to your capabilities by your podiatrist. See the back page for a snapshot of basic tibialis posterior tendon dysfunction exercises.

Exercises

1. Start with a double leg stance, barefoot
2. Rise up onto tip toes and hold for 5 seconds
3. Slowly lower your heels to half way position and hold for 5 seconds
4. Repeat 10 times, two to three times daily
5. Progress this by doing this exercise on a single leg (third image).



Find more TPTD focused exercises on: www.healthystep.co.uk/advice/tibialis-posterior-muscle-strengthening

What if my symptoms fail to resolve?

If after 6 weeks of following the above advice your problem has not improved, seek advice from a Podiatrist.

What other treatment options may be considered?

- Insole therapy/ankle bracing
- Shockwave therapy.

Useful Apps

NHS 24 MSK help

Useful web links

For further exercises and information

- www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/muscle-bone-and-joints/exercises/exercises-for-calf-and-ankle-problems
- www.paintoolkit.org
- www.edinburghleisure.co.uk/get-moving
- www.healthystep.co.uk/advice/tibialis-posterior-muscle-strengthening
- [https://policyonline.nhslothian.scot/Policies/PatientInformation/Posterior tibialis tendon dysfunction.pdf](https://policyonline.nhslothian.scot/Policies/PatientInformation/Posterior%20tibialis%20tendon%20dysfunction.pdf)

