

Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy

Information for patients



What is Extracorporeal Shockwave therapy?

Extracorporeal Shockwave therapy treatment (ESWT) is a clinically proven treatment for people presenting primarily with chronic tendon disorders. This is a successful second line treatment for patients who have found that appropriate conservative management of their symptoms is not working.

Shockwave is a procedure where sound waves of energy are passed through the skin to the injured part of the body using a special device. The shockwaves are mechanical and not electric and work by increasing blood flow to the injured area. This accelerates the body's healing process. The ESWT application lasts about approximately 5 minutes to deliver the shockwave energy and you must attend for 3 sessions over 3 consecutive weeks.

When would I be recommended for this treatment?

You must have an on-going tendinopathy or calcification for more than 4 months and have found that at least one course of conservative treatment for your condition as advised by the podiatry service (such as exercise or orthotics) has not worked to relieve your symptoms.

Conditions which can be treated using ESWT include Plantar Fasciitis and Achilles Tendinopathy.

When should I not have this treatment?

We would not recommend that you have this treatment if any of the following apply to you:

- You are pregnant
- You have a Cardiac pacemaker
- You have had a cortico-steroid injection in the area in past 3 months
- The treatment would be over or near bone growth centres until bone growth is complete
- A growth or tumour is known to be present in or near the treatment area
- If the treatment site has open wounds, skin rashes, swollen, inflamed, or infected areas
- Over an area with reduced blood flow in individuals with vascular disease
- If you have issues with blood clotting or are taking anticoagulant/antiplatelet medications
- If you have a history of latex allergy or allergy to coupling solution.

Frequently asked questions:

How does it work?

Shockwave therapy is a non-surgical treatment in which sound energy is targeted to specific damaged tissues within the abnormal area. This is believed to cause a pro-inflammatory response by increasing the blood flow within the affected area, stimulating cell regeneration and healing, and decreasing local factors which can cause pain.

Is the shockwave treatment painful?

The treatment itself can be painful during the application of the ESWT. The treatment is delivered according to your response; if you are unable to tolerate the pain levels the settings will be adjusted to reduce the discomfort. A mild ache may occur later that day but should pass after a day. You can take analgesic pain relief such as paracetamol before or after attending the session. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (such as ibuprofen) are not recommended during treatment.

Are there any side effects/risks?

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) have deemed this procedure to be a safe treatment option with minimal reported side effects. You will experience some pain during the treatment, but you should be able to tolerate this. Following the treatment, there is a small chance you may experience some temporary redness or bruising to the area which normally resolves quickly. There is a small risk of tendon rupture and damage to the soft tissue.

How long does the treatment session last?

The shockwave appointment is 20 minutes, however the ESWT application lasts 3-4 minutes to deliver the set number of impulses of shockwave energy. You will have to fill in some outcome measure forms at your first session and a consent form.

How often must I attend?

You must attend for 3 sessions. The 3 sessions will take place over 3 consecutive weeks.

If you have any questions or concerns following treatment please call **0131 536 1627** to arrange for a call with the podiatrist.



1. Locating pain by palpation



2. Marking the treatment area



3. Applying the contact gel



4. Delivering the shockwaves