

## Patient information

# Extra-corporeal Shock Wave Therapy (ESWT) for non-insertional Achilles tendinopathy



**Inflamed Achilles tendon**



# Achilles tendinopathy - what is it?

Achilles tendinopathy is an overuse injury causing pain, inflammation and or degeneration of the Achilles tendon at the back of the ankle.

## Symptoms

Consists of pain and stiffness at the back of the ankle, which may have come on gradually overtime and often worse first thing in the morning.

## Treatment for Achilles tendinopathy

- Apply ice for ten minutes every hour, reducing in frequency as required for the first two to three days if an acute injury.
- Long term Achilles tendon injury may respond better to heat, for 10 minutes every couple of hours.
- **Rest:** Stay off your feet as much as possible.
- The Hakan Alfredson heel drop exercise: This involves performing a heel drop exercise 180 times every day for twelve weeks. (Further information can be found on the internet.)

# Orthopaedic Lithotripsy or Extra-corporeal Shock Wave Therapy (ESWT)



Extra-corporeal Shock Wave Therapy (ESWT) is provided to West Suffolk NHS Trust by Core Medical Solutions® (CMS). CMS visit the Trust site every two weeks to provide the service from within a mobile treatment unit.

## What is Orthopaedic Lithotripsy?

Orthopaedic Lithotripsy or ESWT is a non-invasive procedure for the treatment of:

- Plantar fasciitis
- Achilles tendonitis
- Tennis elbow
- Heel spurs
- Trochanteric bursitis
- Trigger point pain and much more

Orthopaedic Lithotripsy is carried out within a clinic setting and requires no injections or medication and provides an alternative to surgery.

## Why choose Core Medical Solutions®

Core Medical Solutions® is one of the leading Lithotripsy services in the UK.

Core Medical Solutions® provides NHS Trusts with high quality specialist Lithotripsy treatment and are strictly reviewed by the Care Quality Commission.

All treatments will be carried out by a Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) registered Allied Health Care Professional, with a minimum requirement of a BSc (honours) degree in diagnostic radiography and registration with the Society of Radiographers.

## **How long does the treatment take?**

A normal session lasts 10 minutes and three sessions are recommended. It is common to experience some pain relief immediately after each session and all three treatments are required to maximise the effects of the treatment.

The National Institute of Health Care Excellence (NICE) has declared extracorporeal shock wave therapy (Orthopaedic Lithotripsy) to be safe and initial trials have demonstrated positive results. Further reading can be found at [www.NICE.org.co.uk](http://www.NICE.org.co.uk)

## **Extra-corporeal Shock Wave Therapy (ESWT) Informed consent information**

### **What is ESWT?**

ESWT is a procedure where shock waves are passed through the skin to the injured part of the foot, using a special device. Extracorporeal means outside of the body.

The shockwaves are mechanical and not electric; they are audible, low energy sound waves, which work by increasing blood flow to the injured area. This accelerates the body's healing process. You will usually require a course of three treatments, one to two weeks apart.

### **Why should I have ESWT?**

ESWT is offered to patients with Achilles tendinopathy and plantar fasciitis, who have not responded adequately to conservative treatments, such as physiotherapy, rest, steroid injection, ice therapy and painkillers. It is a minimally invasive treatment and you can go home the same day. ESWT can offer relief from pain and other symptoms.

### **What are the risks/side effects?**

You will experience some pain during the treatment, but you should be able to tolerate this. Following the treatment, you may experience redness, bruising, swelling and numbness to the area. These side effects should resolve within a week, before your next treatment. There is a small risk of tendon rupture or ligament rupture and damage to the soft tissue. NICE has deemed this procedure to be safe, although there are some uncertainties about how well it works. For this reason, every patient will be monitored before and after the treatments to discover how successful the

outcome is. Studies have shown there is a 50% to 70% chance that it will be effective.

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire before your treatment starts, after three months and again one year following your treatment.

### **You must not have ESWT if:**

- You are pregnant
- You are taking anti-platelets (for example, aspirin of over 75mg or clopidigrel) anticoagulants (such as warfarin or rivaroxaban)
- You have a blood clotting disorder
- You are under the age of 18
- You have been diagnosed with bone cancer
- You have a cardiac pacemaker or other cardiac device
- You have an infection in your foot or a history of tendon or ligament rupture
- You have had any steroid injections in the previous 12 weeks

### **Are there any alternatives?**

ESWT is the next step if conservative treatments such as physiotherapy, rest, steroid injection, ice therapy and painkillers have already been tried.

### **How can I prepare for ESWT?**

- You will need to ensure that you are available for the full course of your treatment.
- You can eat and drink normally before your treatment.
- Please wear comfortable clothes as you will be lying on your front for the treatment.

### **Giving my consent (permission)**

We want to involve you in decisions about your care and treatment. If you decide to go ahead with treatment, the clinic referral letter will act as informed consent for the treatment. By attending the appointment you have accepted the risks and benefits explained at the clinic appointment.

## Who will carry out the procedure?

Your ESWT will be carried out by a HCPC registered healthcare professional. The treatment is well established and has been used for several years throughout the UK and United States.

## Will I feel any pain?

Most patients do experience some pain during the procedure. You will be asked how much pain you are experiencing during the treatment and we will attempt to adjust the treatment to help manage this. The pain will stop at the end of your procedure.

## What do I need to do after I go home?

You will be able to return to your usual activities straight away and can return to work immediately. However we advise you not to undertake any strenuous, pain provoking activity or high impact exercise for 48 hours following the procedure.

If you experience a sudden onset of pain to the area or any loss of function, please contact your GP or NHS 111 which offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics; available over the phone 24 hours a day.

## Further sources of information

### National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

NICE has produced recommendations for patients on ESWT for Achilles tendinopathy and plantar fasciitis. These documents can be accessed on the NICE website.

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)*

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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