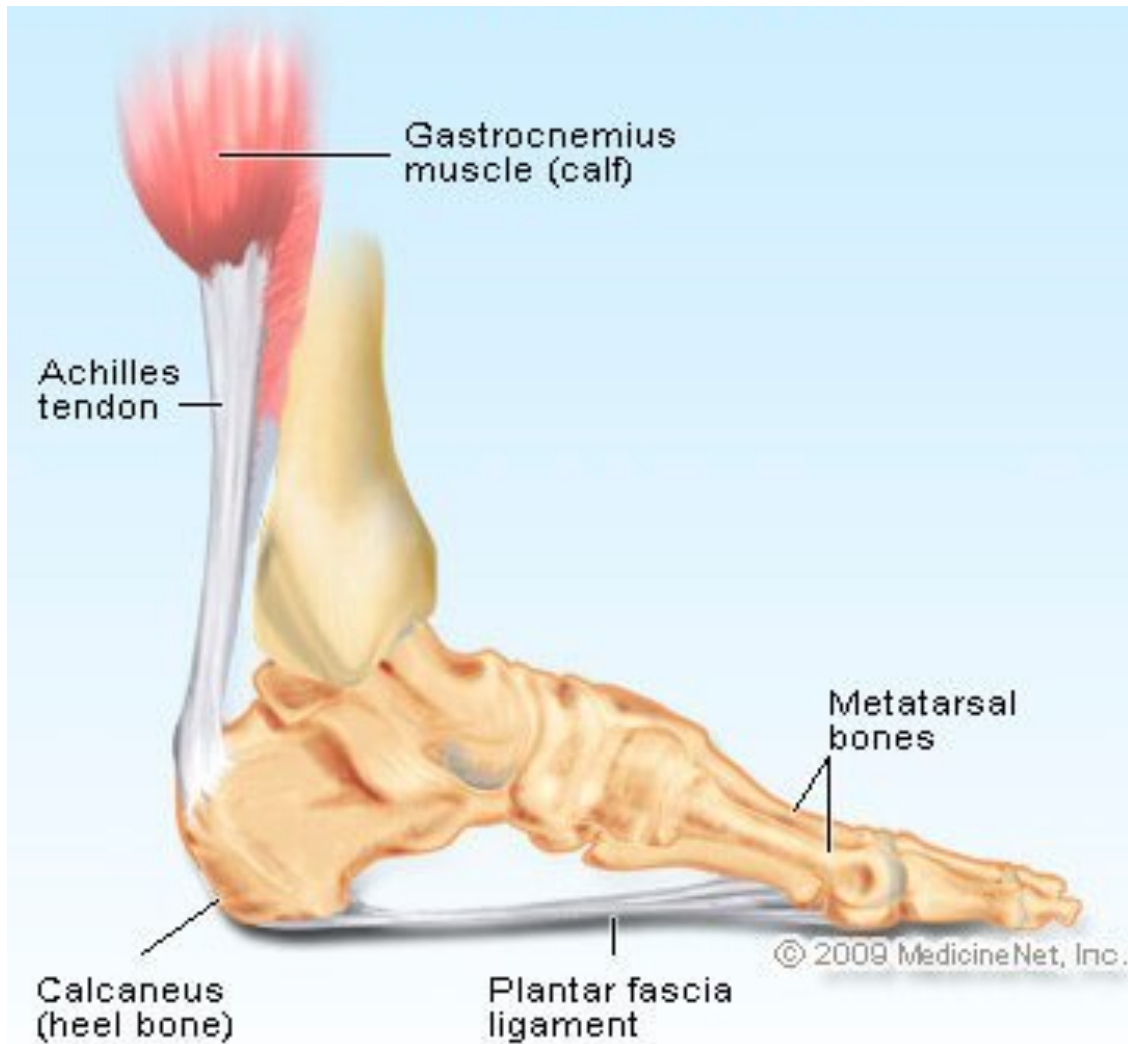


## Achilles Tendonitis



Achilles tendonitis is a condition that involves inflammation and irritation of the Achilles tendon, a large cord-like band of connective tissue located at the back of the ankle joint attaching to the back of the foot. It runs from the heel bone up to the calf muscle to help the foot push off the ground when the calf muscle tightens.

The Achilles tendon is the largest tendon in the human body. Tendons are strong bands of connective tissue that connect muscles to bones and there are several significant muscle groups influenced by the Achilles. The pull of these muscles on the Achilles tendon is very large since these muscles help balance the body while standing and assist in walking, running, and jumping. Therefore irritation and injury to the tendon tends to be functionally significant.

Achilles tendonitis can occur when the tendon itself becomes injured or when the tendon becomes inflamed and rubs against the protective sheath that surrounds it. This can cause a thickening or swelling of the area around the tendon and feel like the tendon has a painful bump on it with pain in the heel area and radiating from the heel.

Achilles tendonitis can be caused by several different problems. Sports and fitness activities and other physical activities that create overuse or repetitive stress can cause or aggravate the condition. Problems are especially noted among long-distance runners and other athletes who rapidly increase mileage or speed or those starting up too quickly after a layoff in exercise or sports activity, without adequately stretching and warming up.

It also occurs in older people whose tendons tend to be stiffer and less flexible, making them more prone to irritation and inflammation. Other causes include deformities in the heel bone, an Achilles that is too short, foot biomechanics that create over pronation (when the feet roll inward when you walk) and inadequate foot gear that doesn't properly support the foot and heel.

Other factors unrelated to the above may also contribute to your risk. Rheumatoid arthritis and the use of a certain class of antibiotics used to treat infections that interfere with collagen turnover in the tendons - both have been linked to tendonitis.