

## **Shockwave therapy for chronic tendinopathy**

Shockwave therapy can be used to treat chronic tendon inflammations in the hip, knee, shoulder, elbow, heel and sole of the foot. This includes, calcific tendinopathy of the shoulder, greater trochanteric pain syndrome, plantar fasciitis, Achilles tendinopathy, patella tendinopathy and proximal hamstring tendinopathy, tennis and golfers elbow.

Radial shockwave therapy is a series of energetic shockwaves applied to the area that needs treatment. A shockwave is a purely mechanical wave not an electrical one. The treatment initiates an inflammation- like condition (pro inflammatory) in the tissue that is being treated. The body responds by increasing the blood circulation and metabolism in the impact area which in turn accelerates the body's own healing processes. The shockwaves breakdown injured tissue and calcifications.

### **Advantages of Shockwave therapy are...**

- Non invasive.
- No medication involved
- No anaesthesia required
- No surgery
- Minimal side effects – (transient redness, small bruise, transient increase in pain)
- No serious complications
- Fast treatment – 30 minutes per session, 3 to 4 sessions required 1 week apart.
- Can give an immediate reduction in pain.
- Significant clinical benefit often seen 6 to 8 weeks after treatment.

### **What is the success rate for radial shockwave therapy?**

Research has shown an overall improvement of 77% in chronic tendinopathies that have not been cured by other treatment. The success rate differs depending on the tendon treated and ranges from an 85% success rate for calcific tendinopathy of the shoulder to 50% success rate for tennis elbow. It can take 3 to 4 months for the maximal effect to be achieved so a review at 12 weeks is recommended following your final treatment. If at this stage your symptoms are unchanged you will be advised of alternative treatments/surgery.

### **Is the Shockwave treatment painful?**

Sometimes the treatment is a bit painful, but most people can stand these few intense minutes without a problem. The pain should be no more than 7/10 in intensity and the frequency of the shocks can be adjusted if required.

**Will I be in pain after treatment?**

You will normally experience reduced pain immediately after the treatment, but a mild and diffuse increase in pain can occur a few hours later, which can last a day or so.

**What should I do if I am in pain after the treatment?**

Radial shockwave therapy initiates a pro-inflammatory condition in the tissue that is being treated. If necessary you can use paracetamol, or a codeine based medication for pain relief after treatment. Do not use anti-inflammatory medication and do not use ice on the treatment area as both will interfere with the bodies self-healing abilities.

**When can I return to activity?**

Even if you have no pain after treatment it is strongly recommended that you refrain from any activity that stresses the treated area for 48 hours after each treatment. You will be able to drive immediately after the treatment.

**Will I need any rehabilitation or exercises after shockwave therapy?**

The success of shockwave therapy is improved by doing a graded isometric / eccentric exercise programme after the course of treatments. Either you will be given an exercise programme by the doctor or you will be referred for further rehabilitation from one of the therapists in the musculoskeletal team.

**Are there any contraindications or precautions that I should be aware of?**

- Cortisone injections cannot be delivered in the 11 weeks prior to shockwave therapy.
- Sometimes, there maybe some mild bruising following shockwave therapy. Therefore this treatment is not recommended if you have any disorders of clotting such as Haemophilia or if you are on warfarin or other anticoagulants.
- If you have a cardiac pacemaker shockwave therapy may interfere with this.
- You should not have shockwave therapy if you are pregnant
- If you have a recent diagnosis of cancer you should notify us as shockwave therapy might not be appropriate treatment in this situation.
- If you have acute inflammation or infection in the treatment area shockwave therapy would not be an appropriate treatment. Shockwave works best with chronic tendinopathies that have been present for more than 3 months.

**What if the shockwave treatment doesn't work for me?**

Even though the response to shockwave treatment is usually exceptionally good within a few weeks it may take several months before the maximal effect is achieved. If after 3 to 4 months you still do not experience a pronounced improvement you will be invited for a review to discuss alternative treatment options.