

Clinical Exercise

Isometric Exercise for Achilles Tendon Pain: Misconceptions, Uncertainties and Practical Applications

Abstract

Isometric exercise is considered to be highly efficacious for pain relief in tendinopathy and is thought to be most beneficial in the early phases of rehabilitation. This belief is based on pilot data in patella tendinopathy and may not be representative of the effects seen in Achilles tendinopathy. There is also very limited longitudinal research assessing the outcomes of isometric exercise programs on pain and function in Achilles tendinopathy. Most of the current literature is believed to be of low quality or utilised sub-optimal exercise programs for management. We will examine current literature, exploring what it can tell us about the use of isometric exercise in the management of Achilles tendinopathy, and then discuss uncertainties and questions that have come from recent research. Finally, we will look at practical applications for isometric exercise in Achilles tendinopathy, developing a model for implementing isometric exercise across a spectrum of Achilles tendon presentations and rehabilitation phases. Isometric exercise can be appropriately and effectively implemented from early through to

late-stage rehabilitation and is appropriate for more than just pain relief.

Chris Pollock

Biography



Chris Pollock is an APA Titled Sports and Exercise Physiotherapist with over 15 years of experience working with both recreational and sub-elite athletes across Australia and the UK. Chris has a particular interest in the management of overuse injuries in endurance sports, including tendon

and bone stress injuries. He has been a dedicated athlete himself, with a marathon PB of 2:58:22. He is passionate about translating the latest evidence into clinical practice to enhance pain management, restore function, and optimise performance for his clients. Chris takes a holistic approach to care, using education, load management, exercise, and training programming to help each client reach their individual goals. In addition to clinical work, Chris regularly delivers professional development and education to new graduates and experienced clinicians alike, and is committed to advancing the profession through practical, evidence-informed strategies that improve outcomes for clients and clinicians.