What do you need to know?

**ACHILLES TENDINITIS**
The Achilles tendon is the thick band felt at the back of the lower leg going into the heel bone. Whilst Achilles Heel referred to the Greek war hero whose one weakness was his heel which eventually led to his demise...Achilles Tendinitis won’t kill you...but it’s quite nagging!

Achilles Tendinitis is an overuse injury of the large tendon band to the back of the lower leg. It connects the muscles of the calf to the heel bone. Tendinitis refers to inflammation of the tendon.

**SYMPTOMS:**
- Mild to moderate dull ache at the back of the lower leg going into the heel bone.
- Pain on mornings after coming off the bed and after standing from a seated position.
- Stiffness at the back of the foot, mainly on mornings.
- Increased pain and discomfort after activities such as running and jumping.
- Swelling may be noticeable at the back of the foot in more severe cases.

**CAUSES:**
- Repetitive stress and strain on the tendon; sudden increase in running/jogging exercise routines.
- Ill-fitting footwear.
- Overstretching the tendon
- Having flat feet and/or high arches

**TREATMENT**

a. Specific stretching and strength training exercises as prescribed by your physiotherapist.

b. Modalities used by your physiotherapist, such as ice and/or ultrasound to relieve inflammation, improve circulation and aid in decreasing pain.

c. Orthotic devices: a low wedge may be inserted into your footwear to slightly elevate your heel and remove some of the strain placed on the tendon.

d. Over the counter medications are commonly used: Aleve, Ibuprofen.

If all else fails...

If conservative treatment fails to relieve symptoms; surgery may be done to repair the tendon. This is not the first step of treatment and occurs in the minority of cases.

Prepared as a public service by the Physiotherapy Association of Trinidad and Tobago
Acknowledgement to Dr. Bianca Lutchman PT, DPT