



Achilles Heel

We have all heard the Greek myth of Achilles, a Greek hero of the Trojan War, who was invulnerable in all of his body except for his heel, which brought him to his death when an arrow was shot into his heel. Hence, the tendon that connects the calf muscles to the heel bone is now known as Achilles tendon.

Achilles Tendon Rupture

The Achilles tendon is the largest tendon in the body, connecting the calf muscles to the heel bone. The Achilles tendon is used for walking, running and jumping. According to the American Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society, the Achilles tendon can

withstand forces of 1,000 pounds or more, but it is also the most frequently ruptured tendon.

A rupture can occur when there is a sudden onset of pain in the back of the ankle and it feels like you have been kicked or hit over that tendon. An Achilles tendon rupture can be treated either surgically or non-surgically. "There are a variety of surgical procedures, which are utilized but generally they involve sewing the two ends of the tendon together," said Dr. Daniel Lehman, an orthopaedic surgeon at Ortholndy and IOH.

After surgery, patients are placed in a splint to allow the incision to heal and then they are started on a range-of-motion program two weeks later. Dr. Lehman says he keeps patients non-weight bearing until four weeks after surgery and then they can start weight bearing in a walking boot, which promotes quicker healing of the tendon. "Strengthening of the muscles that form the Achilles needs to continue until the patient is back to full strength and this typically takes the better part of a year," said Dr. Lehman. "If the rupture is treated non-surgically by being placed in a cast there is a longer recovery time."

OrthoIndy is the orthopaedic providers for the Indiana Fever. Tamika Catchings, who plays as a forward for the Indiana Fever, suffered an Achilles tendon rupture during a game when she went to push off on her foot. "My Achilles injury is definitely the most painful injury that I have ever dealt with," said Tamika.



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- Tamika Catchings

She underwent surgery at IOH to repair her ruptured tendon with Dr. Lehman. After surgery, Tamika was unable to play basketball for ten months while she was recovering. "Dr. Lehman has been super supportive in my progress and in the steps that I had to take to get to where I am today," said Tamika who is still playing for the Indiana Fever.

Tamika is a two-time Olympic gold medalist for the United States. She medaled at the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Greece, and again in Beijing, China. Tamika was named the WNBA's Defensive Player of the Year in 2005 and 2006. In 2009 the Fever advanced to the WNBA finals against the Phoenix Mercury but fell short of the championship.

To learn more about the Indiana Fever please visit their Web site at wnba.com/fever

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