

Posterior Tibial Tendinitis

Posterior tibial tendinitis is an inflammation of the tendon of the posterior tibial muscle. The muscle attaches in the leg behind the tibia and fibula. The tendon begins in the lower one third of the leg and passes behind the inside of the ankle to attach in the midpart of the foot (Figure 5.2). The tendinitis usually develops from overuse and is more common in people who pronate excessively. Other factors that frequently cause overuse injuries may also contribute to this tendinitis, such as a rapid increase in activity; always running on the same side of the road, with the slope in the same direction; running with worn shoes; or inadequate warm-up or stretching.

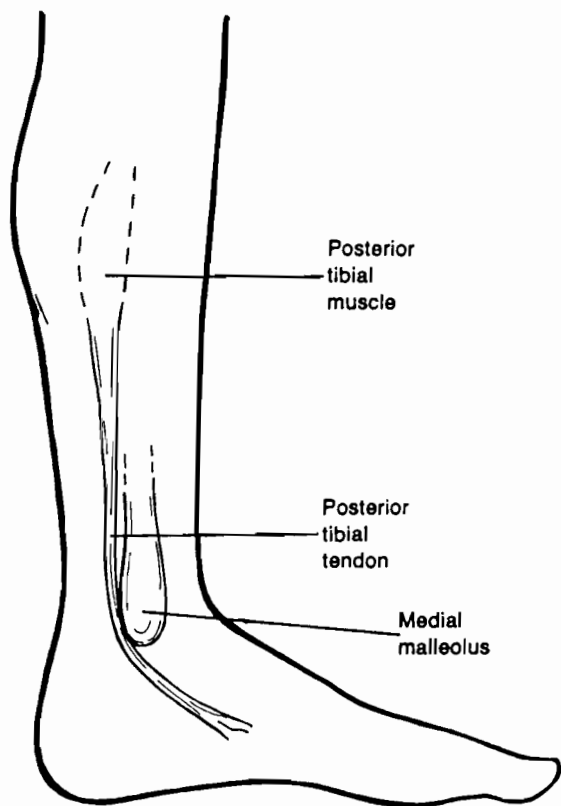


Figure 5.2 Posterior tibial tendinitis can develop anywhere along the course of the tendon on the inside of the ankle.

Symptoms include pain, swelling, and sometimes crepitus or a feeling of roughness over the tendon. The pain is on the inside of the ankle, usually just behind and below the ankle bone, but it may extend up into the leg. During the condition's early stages, its pain is present at the start of activity, gradually subsides, and then recurs after the activity is completed. If untreated, it can progress to increasing pain and swelling over the area. When the pain involves the tendon higher in the leg, the tendinitis may be mistaken for shin splints or a stress fracture.

Treatment for posterior tibial tendinitis initially should include the basic treatment for inflammation due to overuse: RICE—rest, ice, compression, and elevation. In addition, anti-inflammatories help reduce swelling; and any biomechanical imbalances should be controlled. For more chronic cases, a regimen of ice after activity and heat applied at bedtime may be effective. Professional treatment for resistant cases may include orthotic devices, physical therapy, and stronger oral anti-inflammatories. Cortisone injections should be used only for the most resistant cases and should be followed by 2 weeks of inactivity.

To prevent recurrence, the causative factors of the tendinitis—such as training techniques, worn shoes, biomechanical problems, and training environment—should be controlled. Posterior tibial tendinitis is a common problem that can interfere with sports participation. It should be treated as soon as any symptoms develop.

Suggested Reading for "Posterior Tibial Tendinitis"

Scheller et al. (1980)