

Comprehensive Tendonitis Recovery Guide

A step-by-step protocol with exercises, supplements, and progress tracking

Understanding Tendonitis

Tendonitis involves inflammation of the tendons, which connect muscle to bone. Unlike muscles, tendons have poor blood supply, making recovery slower. The key to effective recovery is understanding that tendons respond best to controlled, progressive loading rather than complete rest.

Why This Approach Works

- Controlled loading** stimulates collagen production and aligns tendon fibers
- Eccentric exercises** (lowering phase) have been proven most effective for tendon remodeling
- Proper nutrition** provides building blocks for tendon repair
- Consistent tracking** helps identify what works and maintains motivation

Phase 1: Initial Recovery (Days 1-7)

Step 1: Reduce Inflammation

What to do: Ice the area for 15-20 minutes, 3-4 times daily. Use compression if swollen.

Why: Initial inflammation is a natural response to injury, but excessive swelling can delay healing. Icing constricts blood vessels, reducing swelling and pain.

Step 2: Gentle Movement

What to do: Perform pain-free range of motion exercises 2-3 times daily.

Why: Complete immobilization can lead to stiffness and weakened tendon structure. Gentle movement promotes blood flow without stressing damaged tissues.

Step 3: Initial Supplementation

What to take:

- Omega-3 fatty acids (1000-2000mg daily)
- Turmeric/Curcumin (500mg twice daily)
- Vitamin C (500-1000mg daily)

Why: Omega-3s reduce inflammation, turmeric is a natural anti-inflammatory, and vitamin C is essential for collagen formation - the primary structural protein in tendons.

Phase 1 Progress Tracking

Metric	Record
Daily pain level (1-10)	
Swelling presence (Yes/No)	
Range of motion improvement	
Supplement consistency	

Phase 2: Tendon Loading (Weeks 2-3)

Step 1: Eccentric Exercises

What to do: Based on your affected area:

- Achilles:** Eccentric heel drops (3 sets of 15, twice daily)
- Elbow:** Eccentric wrist curls (3 sets of 15, once daily)
- Shoulder:** Eccentric lateral raises (3 sets of 12, once daily)

Why: Eccentric loading (the lowering phase) creates more tension on tendons than concentric movements, stimulating collagen production and tendon remodeling. This is the most evidence-based approach for tendon rehabilitation.

Step 2: Progressive Loading

What to do: Gradually increase resistance as pain decreases:

- Week 2: Bodyweight or light resistance
- Week 3: Add light weights or resistance bands
- Always maintain proper form

Why: Tendons adapt to gradually increasing loads. Progressive overload stimulates the fibroblasts that produce collagen, strengthening the tendon over time.

Step 3: Supportive Supplementation

What to take:

- Collagen peptides (10-15g daily, taken with vitamin C)
- Magnesium (300-400mg daily)
- Continue Omega-3s

Why: Collagen provides the building blocks for tendon repair. Vitamin C is necessary for collagen synthesis. Magnesium supports muscle function and reduces cramping, which can protect healing tendons.

Phase 2 Progress Tracking

Exercise	Sets x Reps	Resistance	Pain During (1-10)
Eccentric heel drops			
Eccentric wrist curls			
Eccentric lateral raises			
Weekly progress notes:			

Phase 3: Strengthening (Weeks 4-6)

Step 1: Full Range Strength Exercises

What to do: Progress to full range movements:

- Lower body:** Bodyweight squats, calf raises
- Upper body:** Resistance band rows, push-ups (modified if needed)
- Core:** Planks, bird-dog exercises

Why: Full range movements restore functional strength and ensure the tendon can handle varied stresses. Core strengthening provides stability that protects peripheral joints and tendons.

Step 2: Load Management

What to do: Follow the 24-hour pain rule:

- If pain increases >3/10 within 24 hours of exercise, reduce load
- If pain remains <3/10, maintain or slightly increase load
- If no pain, progressively increase challenge

Why: Tendons need approximately 24 hours to respond to loading. This rule helps you find the optimal training load - enough to stimulate adaptation but not so much that it causes regression.

Step 3: Long-Term Support Supplements

What to take:

- Continue collagen and vitamin C
- Add Vitamin D (1000-2000 IU daily)
- Consider MSM (Methylsulfonylmethane) for joint health

Why: Vitamin D supports bone health, which is connected to tendon function. MSM provides sulfur, a key component of connective tissues. These supplements support long-term tendon health beyond the recovery period.

Phase 3 Progress Tracking

Exercise	Sets x Reps	Load	Pain During (1-10)	24-hr Response
Squats				
Rows				
Planks				
Weekly progress notes:				

Nutrition Guide for Tendon Recovery

Essential Nutrients

What to focus on:

- Protein:** 1.6-2.2g per kg of bodyweight daily
- Vitamin C:** From citrus, berries, bell peppers
- Zinc:** From lean meats, nuts, legumes
- Manganese:** From whole grains, leafy greens
- Water:** 2-3 liters daily for tissue hydration

Why: Tendons are primarily made of collagen, which requires specific nutrients for synthesis. Protein provides amino acids, vitamin C enables cross-linking of collagen fibers, and minerals like zinc and manganese act as cofactors in the repair process.

Daily Nutrition Tracking

Date	Protein (g)	Vitamin C sources	Water (liters)	Supplements taken

Exercise Demonstrations

Eccentric Heel Drops (Achilles)

How to perform:

- Stand on a step with heels hanging off the edge
- Rise up on both toes
- Shift weight to affected leg
- Slowly lower heel below step level over 3-5 seconds
- Return to starting position using both legs

Why it works: This exercise specifically loads the Achilles tendon during the lengthening phase (eccentric), which stimulates collagen production and remodeling of tendon fibers.

Eccentric Wrist Curls (Tennis/Golfer's Elbow)

How to perform:

- Sit with forearm supported on table, wrist hanging off edge
- Hold light weight (1-2kg to start) in hand
- Use other hand to help lift weight to extended wrist position
- Remove assisting hand and slowly lower weight over 3-5 seconds
- Repeat for prescribed repetitions

Why it works: This targets the forearm tendons that are often affected in elbow tendonitis. The slow eccentric phase builds tendon strength without excessive strain.