



GARNET ORTHOPEDIC
SOLUTIONS



PATIENT EDUCATION GUIDE

Understanding Peroneal Tendinopathy and Protecting Your Ankle

A practical guide to why the outside of your ankle hurts, what puts you at risk, and how a personalized plan can get you back to comfortable, stable movement.

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SECTION 01

What Is Peroneal Tendinopathy?

Peroneal tendinopathy refers to any impairment to the structure and function of the tendons of the peroneal muscles, the peroneus longus and peroneus brevis, which run down the outside of the lower leg. The most common symptoms are pain, discomfort, and swelling on the outside portion of the ankle.

A number of pathologies fall under the tendinopathy umbrella, but the most common are peroneal tendinitis and peroneal tendinosis. The two are clinically similar and often mistaken for one another, though the distinction matters for treatment. Both are commonly associated with athletes or workers involved in repetitive strain activities, like running or factory line work.

SECTION 02

Recognizing the Symptoms

Symptoms are typically isolated to the lateral, or outside, portion of the ankle and may include:

- Sharp pain or a dull ache
- Muscular tightness
- Swelling
- Reduced ankle stability, range of motion, and strength
- Ankle sprains
- Stiffness upon waking in the morning
- Pain or stiffness when rising after extended periods of sitting
- Changes to the way you walk

SECTION 03

Tendinitis vs. Tendinosis

One key difference is that tendinosis doesn't carry the swelling that comes with tendinitis. Tendinitis is an inflammation of the tendon resulting from a micro-tear caused by an acute overload, such as forceful trauma that's too heavy or too sudden. Tendinosis, by contrast, develops from chronic overuse, like repetitive strain over time without adequate recovery.

The primary focus in treating tendinitis is controlling swelling, while initial treatment of tendinosis focuses on eliminating the source of repetitive strain. With both, controlling biomechanics and protecting the tendon from excessive strain is the long-term goal. One practical distinction is the use of anti-

inflammatory medications; speak with your family physician about whether these are appropriate for your situation.

SECTION 04

Risk Factors Worth Knowing

Risk factors for discomfort include:

- Activities with lateral, or side-to-side, movement or sudden direction changes
- Poor-fitting or worn-out footwear
- Unsupportive footwear, such as wearing sandals while active; choosing footwear that properly controls and cushions the foot and lower limb matters
- Uneven terrain, including trails or loose gravel, which places greater strain on the involved tissues
- High-impact, high-volume, or high-intensity exercise
- Weight: depending on your mechanics, being overweight or obese may increase strain on the muscles and tendons of the lower legs



Sports with frequent cutting and direction changes place repeated lateral strain on the peroneal tendons.

Your individual mechanics may also play a role. Depending on your alignment, you may be predisposed to straining the muscles and tendons on the outside of your lower limbs; consult your physiotherapist or podiatrist if you suspect this applies to you.

If your mechanics might be contributing to your symptoms, an assessment can confirm it and point to the right fix.

[Book an Assessment](#)

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SECTION 05

Staying Active With Pain

Staying active while you recover is important for your overall health and well-being, but the exercises you choose matter just as much. As a general guideline, avoid anything that induces or intensifies your symptoms, both during the activity and afterward. With soft tissue injuries like this, the tissue often warms up and feels fine while you're active, only for discomfort to set in once you stop, after a period of rest, or the next morning when you get out of bed.

If that pattern sounds familiar, reduce the intensity or duration of the activity until you reach a level that doesn't provoke symptoms. In particular, avoid sports with sudden direction changes, like soccer, basketball, volleyball, or racquet sports, along with lateral-movement exercises such as plyometrics, Zumba, or kickboxing. Mild-intensity exercise or cross-training that keeps you active without repeating the aggravating motion is generally the better choice while you recover.

SECTION 06

Your Treatment Options

Your family physician typically serves as the first line of care, helping with medications, lifestyle adjustments, or a referral to the right specialist. From there, several professionals may play a role:

- Physiotherapists and kinesiologists can help with exercises, stretches, or lifestyle adjustments
- Podiatrists can address motions of the foot that may be impacting the load placed on the peroneal muscles
- Kinesiologists can also assist with ergonomics, ensuring your living and work environments support your posture and mechanics
- Massage therapists may help ease muscular stiffness or discomfort

SECTION 07

Footwear Recommendations

Appropriate footwear selection matters for daily comfort and depends on your specific mechanics. Generally, footwear with ample cushion and support works well while recovering from peroneal tendinopathy. The type of shoe you choose is particularly important here: a shoe with added support for the inside of the foot, such as a pronation control shoe, limits how much your foot rolls toward the midline of the body. If that motion is already naturally reduced, or if your foot moves the opposite way and supinates, this type of shoe may actually worsen your symptoms.

Whichever shoe you select, proper fit is vital: length, width, depth, and heel height all matter. Consult your pedorthist for recommendations specific to your foot type and intended use.

SECTION 08

Custom Orthotics vs. Off-the-Shelf

Current medical literature shows custom foot orthoses can reduce the strain placed on the peroneus longus and lateral gastrocnemius muscles while walking, the same two muscles most affected by peroneal tendinopathy. Any effort to offload strain from these muscles is worthwhile.

Off-the-shelf orthotics are pre-fabricated devices that fit into your shoes right off the shelf, often heat-moldable for a degree of immediate customization. Truly custom foot orthoses are built specifically around a 3D model of your own foot and can be completely tailored to your needs.

	OFF-THE-SHELF ORTHOTICS	CUSTOM ORTHOTICS
Cost	Cheaper upfront	Often partly covered by extended health benefits
Availability	Instant, off a shelf	Made for you, ready in a matter of days
Fit	Generic size range	Shaped to your exact foot and gait
What it does	Offers general support	Offloads strain from the specific muscles involved
Lifespan	Wears out, replace often	Built to last, and adjustable as you recover

Depending on your symptoms, an OTS device may be a great first step. If it doesn't quite offer enough support, custom is usually what gets you the rest of the way.

Think you may be a candidate for custom foot orthoses?

See Custom Orthotics

SECTION 09

What to Expect at Garnet

Your Garnet pedorthist creates an individualized treatment plan suited to your specific needs, goals, and symptoms, addressing both your current concerns and future prevention. At your initial appointment, we

complete a thorough foot examination, and a follow-up exam ensures your plan is meeting your goals so it can be reassessed as needed.

Want to understand what a gait analysis actually involves before you book?

[Learn About Gait Analysis](#)

[Book Now](#)

SECTION 10

Prevention and Long-Term Ankle Health

Because peroneal tendinopathy often comes down to repetitive lateral strain, prevention focuses on managing that load thoughtfully:

- Choose supportive, well-fitted footwear suited to your specific mechanics
- Favor even terrain where possible, and adjust effort on trails or loose gravel
- Moderate high-impact, lateral-movement activities, especially during flare-ups
- Maintain a healthy body weight to reduce strain on the lower leg
- Use custom foot orthoses where your assessment shows they would help

Protecting the outside of your ankle starts with understanding what's driving the strain.

Ready to talk to a pedorthist?

Book a consultation and get a treatment plan built around your specific mechanics, gait, and goals.

[Book an Appointment](#)

Garnet Orthopedic Solutions provides pedorthic assessment, custom orthotics, and footwear guidance built around each patient's specific anatomy and goals, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. Our clinic combines hands-on biomechanical assessment with practical, evidence-informed treatment, so patients leave with a plan they understand and can actually follow.

Jeff Lewis, C. Ped (C)

Canadian Certified Pedorthist

Jeff leads patient assessment and custom orthotic care at Garnet Orthopedic Solutions, working with patients to identify the root cause of their foot and lower limb pain and to build a treatment plan suited to their specific needs, goals, and symptoms.

garnetsolutions.ca | This guide is intended for general education and does not replace an individual assessment. Please consult your pedorthist or physician about your specific symptoms.

Appendix: Image Sources

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#	DESCRIPTION	PHOTOGRAPHER	SOURCE
1	Cover — basketball players in action on court	Wallace Chuck	pexels.com/photo/2874717
2	Sec. 4 — basketball players during a match	bilal bouhabba	pexels.com/photo/16787680

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