



Shockwave Therapy for Chronic Tendinopathy



What is Shockwave Therapy?

Extracorporeal shockwave therapy (ESWT) is a series of energetic shockwaves applied to the area that needs treatment. A shockwave is a purely mechanical wave, not an electrical one. The treatment initiates an inflammation-like condition (pro-inflammatory) in the tissue that is being treated. The body responds by increasing the blood circulation and metabolism in the impact area which in turn accelerates the body's own healing processes. The shockwaves break down injured tissue and calcification. ESWT can be used to treat chronic tendon inflammations in the hip, knee, shoulder, elbow, heel and sole of the foot.

Conditions suitable for treatment:

- Calcific tendinopathy of the shoulder
- Greater trochanteric pain syndrome
- plantar fasciitis
- Achilles tendinopathy
- Patellar tendinopathy
- Proximal hamstring tendinopathy
- Tennis / Golfers elbow
- Osgood-Schlatters
- Trochanteric bursitis – gluteal tendinopathy
- Medial tibial stress syndrome

Advantages of Shockwave Therapy:

- Non-invasive
- No medication involved
- No anaesthesia required
- No surgery
- Minimal side effects – (transient redness, small bruise, transient increase in pain)
- Fast treatment – 30 minutes per session, 3 to 5 sessions required 1 week apart
- No serious complications
- Can give an immediate reduction in pain
- Significant clinical benefit often seen 6 to 8 weeks after treatment

What is the success rate for ESWT?

Research has shown an overall improvement of 77% in chronic tendinopathies that have not been cured by other treatment. The success rate differs depending on the tendon treated and ranges from an 85% success rate for calcific tendinopathy of the shoulder to 50% success rate for tennis elbow. It can take 3 months for the treatment to start working, and your pain can continue to improve for up to a year after treatment. A review at 12 weeks is recommended following your final treatment, if at this stage your symptoms are unchanged you will be advised of an alternative treatment or surgery.

Is the ESWT painful?

Sometimes the treatment is a bit painful, but most people can stand these few intense minutes without a problem. The pain should be no more than 7/10 in intensity and the frequency of the shocks can be adjusted if required. A minimum intensity needs to be attained for treatment to be therapeutic.

Will I be in pain after ESWT?

You will normally experience reduced pain immediately after the treatment, but a mild and diffuse increase in pain can occur a few hours later, which can last a day or so.

What should I do if I am in pain after ESWT?

If necessary you can use paracetamol or a codeine based medication for pain relief after treatment. **DO NOT USE ANTI-INFLAMMATORY MEDICATIONS and DO NOT USE ICE** on the treatment area as both will interfere with the body's self-healing abilities.



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When can I return to activity?

Even if you have no pain after treatment it is strongly recommended that you refrain from any activity that stresses the treated area for 48 hours after each treatment. You will be able to drive immediately after the treatment.

Will I need any rehabilitation or exercises after ESWT?

The success of ESWT is improved by doing a graded isometric / eccentric exercise programme after the course of treatments. You will be given an exercise programme by the practitioner.

Are there any contraindications or precautions that I should be aware of?

- Cortisone injections cannot be delivered in the 11 weeks prior to treatment
- Sometimes, there maybe some mild bruising following treatment. Therefore, ESWT is not recommended if you have any disorders of clotting such as Haemophilia or if you are on warfarin or other anticoagulants.
- If you have a cardiac pacemaker, ESWT may interfere with this.
- You should not have ESWT if you are pregnant.
- If you have a recent diagnosis of cancer you should notify us, as ESWT might not be appropriate treatment in this situation.
- If you have acute inflammation or infection in the treatment area, ESWT would not be an appropriate treatment. ESWT works best with chronic tendinopathies that have been present for more than 3 months.

What if ESWT doesn't work for me?

Even though the response to ESWT is usually exceptionally good within a few weeks, it may take several months before the maximal effect is achieved. If after 3 to 4 months you still do not experience a pronounced improvement, you will be invited for a review to discuss alternative treatment options.

How much is ESWT?

ESWT is £110 per 30 minute session. You will usually require between 3 to 5 sessions.

Who should I contact if I have a problem following ESWT?

Please contact Avenue Clinic on 728798 or reception@avenueclinic.co.uk

