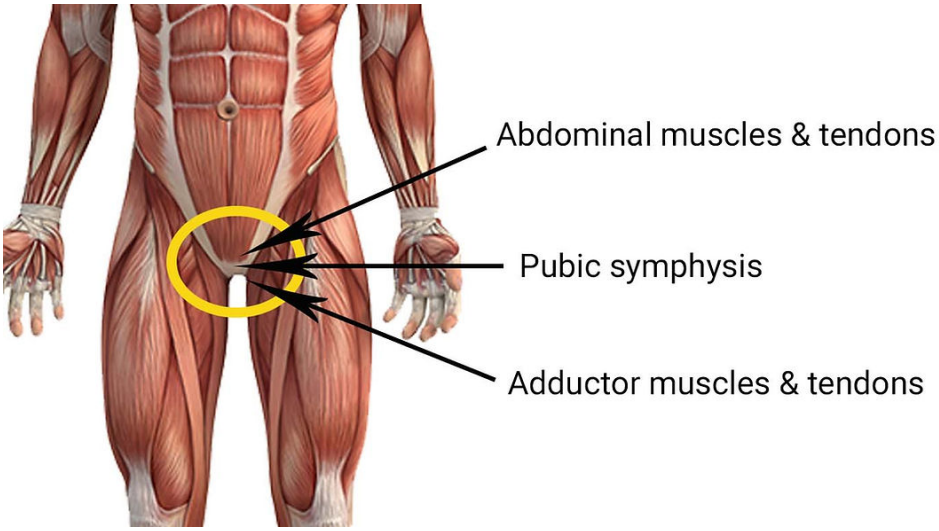
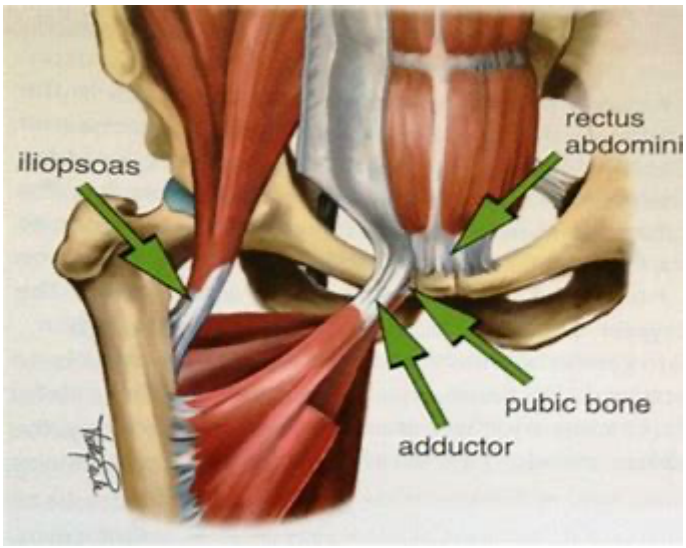
Abdominal tendinopathy

The best treatment for abdominal tendinopathy is a progressive rehabilitation programme that allows the tendons to calm down and regain the strength they've lost as a result of the injury.

The anatomy related to abdominal tendinopathy





The images show that very powerful muscles, including the rectus abdominis muscles (your six-pack) and the adductor muscles (the inner thigh muscles) attach to the pubic bone.

This is important, because the tendons of these two sets of muscles are actually attached to each other via a thick layer of fascia that crosses over the pubic bone (see the image above). They work together as you go about normal life or when participating in sports, and if one of them gets injured it often affects the other as well. This is why you may end up getting adductor tendon injuries if you neglect abdominal tendinopathy or vice versa.

Symptoms

Abdominal tendinopathy associated pain often starts on one side of the body where the tendons attach to the pubic bone and pubic symphysis. In severe cases, it then crosses over and both sides become painful. The pain can refer in either direction, up into the abdominal wall, or downwards into the adductor muscles. It can also be felt in the front of the groin (the genitals).

It should be noted that abdominal tendinopathy is only one cause of pain in these areas, so it is important to have it checked out by your doctor to see whether it might actually be something else, for example, a hernia.

Causes of abdominal tendinopathy

Abdominal tendinopathy is an overuse injury that can occur suddenly, for example whilst doing a very hard training session, or slowly over time because of insufficient recovery time between sessions (overtraining).

Often it is assumed that cause of abdominal tendinopathy would be overdoing it in the gym with sit-ups or adductor exercises and these are indeed some of the ways we get the injury. But, interestingly, this injury is quite often seen in running sports - especially ones that involve a lot of twisting and turning, such as football, rugby, and hockey. This is because the abdominal muscles are active and working whenever a person is upright and moving.

Long-distance runners can also develop abdominal tendinopathy; this is often a secondary injury as a result of an injury to the adductor tendons or osteitis pubis.

Another common cause of abdominal tendinopathy that is not linked to sport is giving birth, as this process obviously puts a lot of strain on that area.

Treatment for abdominal tendinopathy

The most important and successful treatment for abdominal tendinopathy is a combination of **relative rest** and **strength training**. The relative rest allows the pain and sensitivity to settle down while the strength training is needed to restore the strength that was lost due to the injury.

Relative rest and load management

Injured abdominal tendons lose some of their strength, resulting in them now not being strong enough to cope with the forces and loads put through them by your sport/activity. Continued participation in your sport, without reducing the intensity and/or duration of the said participation, will just keep on making it worse. Failing to reduce or cease your participation in your sport or activity will have a negative impact on the progress of your rehab, because you're trying to strengthen the tendons on top of the load that your usual sport activities put through it.

It is obvious why the relative rest and/or load management is so important to achieving a full recovery. Initially, a reduction of the frequency and/or duration of playing/training and maybe even the type of sport you do, to a level that doesn't aggravate your injury is prudent. By how much you should reduce it will depend on your type of sport and how severe your injury is. The aim is to establish an intensity/frequency/volume you can do that does not cause an increase in your symptoms.

For example, if you are a rugby player, it will very likely mean that you need to cut out high intensity sessions like matches and movements where you twist and turn. So, it will likely mean a break from regular for a while, but you may still be able to run to maintain some of your fitness through, for example, playing walking rugby and just going for a steady paced run. However, if even running hurts, you'll have to replace it with something else.

For runners, reducing their speed and distance as a load management adjustment will likely help. However, for some people, even that doesn't work. If it's really sensitive, you may have to stop all running for a while and just do some cycling or cross-training until it's recovered and strengthened enough to cope with running again.

For those people who focus on strength training in the gym, such as weight-lifters and power lifters, they will likely have to reduce the weights they lift and try to find a level that doesn't aggravate their pain.

Top tip: A tendon might only tell you the next day if you've overdone it, so if your abdominal tendons complain first thing in the morning, think about what you did the previous day that might have upset them.

Strength training

That part of your abdominal tendon that's injured is now weaker than prior to the injury and so you have to strengthen it sufficiently to be able to fully return to participation in your sport/activity.

It's important to remember that this is likely to be an overuse injury. You have to be mindful of how you introduce exercise and strength training. Be cautious at first and start with lighter weights. You can always increase the load but, if you are over-ambitious at the start, you might further injury yourself ands set back a full return to sport by several more weeks.

Low load isometric contractions (like an isometric crunch), where you tense your muscles without moving, tend to work really well for abdominal tendinopathies, especially in the early rehab stages.

Top tip: It's important to increase the exercise intensity and complexity gradually over time. What exercises you should progress to and what level of intensity you should work up to will depend on your sport and your individual goals.

Recovery days

A common mistake when recovering from abdominal tendinopathy is over training their rehab'. People are so keen to get back to their sport as soon as possible, they believe that if they do their exercises every day, they'll recover quicker!

In most cases, the opposite is actually true. Whenever you exercise, your body sustains microdamage. This is normal. Your body then repairs this microdamage and that's how you grow stronger over time. However, if you don't allow enough recovery/repair time between your training sessions, the microdamage accumulates and causes overuse injuries like abdominal tendinopathy.

Tendons take much longer than muscles to recover after exercise (about 42 to 72 hours). So you have to allow enough time between your rehab sessions for this to take place, otherwise you'll just end up overtraining it again.

How we can help?

If you think you might have abdominal tendinopathy, or any other musculoskeletal injury, **contact us today** to make an on-line, in clinic or home visit appointment with one of our therapists.

www.cksportsinjury.co.uk

email: info@cksportsinjury.co.uk

Tel: (+44) 077 863 34567