

## Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy (ESWT)



### *What is ESWT?*

Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy is a non-invasive treatment usually offered when chronic symptoms have persisted for at least 3-6 months and have not responded to conservative treatments, such as physiotherapy, activity modification, ice therapy, orthotics, painkillers, and steroid injection.

### *How does it work?*

The treatment produces an inflammatory response which increases metabolic and circulatory activity. This stimulates your body's healing process thereby promoting recovery and remodelling of damaged/dysfunctional tissues.

ESWT aids in the breakdown of scar tissue and calcification and can also stimulate pain relief through neural mechanisms (reduction of nerve signals to the brain).

### *What is the success rate?*

ESWT is a highly effective treatment for chronic tendon disorders and is widely used in practice. Research demonstrates a 70-80% success rate across a vast range of conditions. It may not work for everyone, but it helps most people when other conservative treatments have failed. It has helped to prevent many people from undergoing invasive or surgical treatments.



### *What conditions can ESWT treat?*

Shockwave therapy can be used to treat a wide range of chronic tendon problems in the hip, knee, shoulder, elbow, Achilles and sole of the foot. It is recommended for conditions such as:

- Plantar Fasciitis (heel pain)
- Tennis or Golfers elbow
- Tendinitis of the shoulder
- Achilles tendinopathies
- Patellar tendinitis
- Greater Trochanteric Pain Syndrome (lateral hip pain)
- Proximal hamstring tendinitis

### *What are the benefits?*

- Stimulates the body's natural self-healing process
- Non-Invasive
- Immediate reduction in pain
- Increased Range of movement
- May eliminate need for surgery



## *What to expect after treatment?*

You may experience a reduced level of pain, or no pain at all, immediately following the ESWT treatment, but pain may occur a few hours later. This usually lasts for a couple of days, but in rare cases can last longer.

Some soreness and pain may occur as ESWT initiates an inflammatory reaction in the tissues. You may experience some side effects after treatment including skin redness, bruising, haematoma, localised red spots, and numbness. All of these should resolve in a few days prior to your next treatment. There is a small risk of tendon/ligament rupture and soft tissue damage.

## *What does ESWT involve?*

Firstly, you will need to be assessed to ensure ESWT is appropriate for you. Once this has been established and you have filled out your consent form, you will be booked in for treatment. Treatments should last no longer than 15 minutes dependent on pain severity and history of the condition.

A contact gel is applied before administering the ESWT. Treatment is non-invasive and involves mechanical shockwaves being passed through the skin to the affected area via a hand-held probe. Extracorporeal means outside the body. The shockwaves are not electrical but are low energy sound waves that can be heard.

Most patients do experience some pain or discomfort during the procedure. You will be asked how much pain you are experiencing during the treatment, and we will attempt to adjust the treatment to help manage this.

You should expect to attend 3-6 treatment sessions, once weekly apart for the best results.

Current evidence suggests that ESWT is a safe and effective treatment; however, it is most effective when combined with a full range of rehabilitation, which will be agreed with you by your treating Physiotherapist.

## *How to prepare for treatment?*

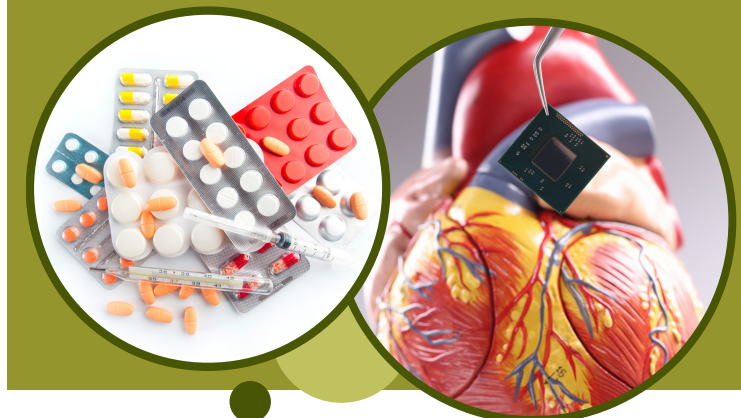
- No pain relief prior to treatment sessions
- Stop use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (for example ibuprofen, aspirin) 14 days prior to first treatment, throughout treatment and 6 weeks after final treatment session
- Continue with stretching and eccentric loading programme
- Adequate rest (Avoid continuous overloading of pain site)
- No strenuous, pain provoking or high impact activity for 48 hours post treatment

## *ESWT should not be completed if you:*

- Are Pregnant / trying to conceive
- Under the age of 18
- Are taking Anti-platelets/anticoagulants
- Have an infection the affected area
- Have a blood clotting disorder
- Have been diagnosed with bone cancer
- Have a cardiac pacemaker
- Have had a steroid injection in the last 12 weeks/previous tendon rupture

## *You might not be allowed to have ESWT if you have one of the following:*

- Taking Anticoagulant medication (e.g., Warfarin)
- Fracture near the treatment area
- Underlying Prosthetic joint
- Previous tendon rupture in the affected area
- Decrease sensation over the affected area



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