



HH MASSAGE THERAPY

Specialising in Recovery

PERSONALISED REHABILITATION PLAN

Prepared for Alex Example

3 July 2026

HH Massage Therapy

Sports & Remedial Massage

START HERE

- 1

Read the first few pages once

Your assessment, what is going on, and your 4-phase roadmap. This is the why behind everything else.
- 2

Start Phase 1 tomorrow

Begin with the gentle Phase 1 actions. Only move to the next phase when you meet the criteria on that page.
- 3

Keep the Daily Routine Card on your phone

There is a screenshot-friendly card near the back. It is the only page you need day to day.
- 4

Reply to my email any time

If anything is unclear or your symptoms change, just reply to the email this plan arrived on.

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Based on everything you told me, here is my assessment of what is likely going on. This is not a formal diagnosis, but an informed professional opinion to guide your rehab.

CLIENT PROFILE

NAME

Alex Example

PRIMARY COMPLAINT

Aching and tightness at the back of my left heel and calf, worst first thing in the morning and after running. Started after I ramped up my mileage training for a half marathon.

WORKING IMPRESSION

Symptoms consistent with left Achilles tendinopathy (load-related tendon irritation). Possible additional contribution from left soleus and gastrocnemius overuse or strain

PAIN SCORE

●●●●○○○○○○ 4/10

KEY CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

• Rapid mileage increase

Going from 20km to 35km per week in four weeks gave the tendon far more load than it had time to adapt to, which is the most common cause of this pattern.

• Previous Achilles history

The same tendon grumbled two years ago, meaning it may have some residual stiffness or scarring that makes it less tolerant of sudden load jumps than a fully fresh tendon.

• Standing on feet all day at work

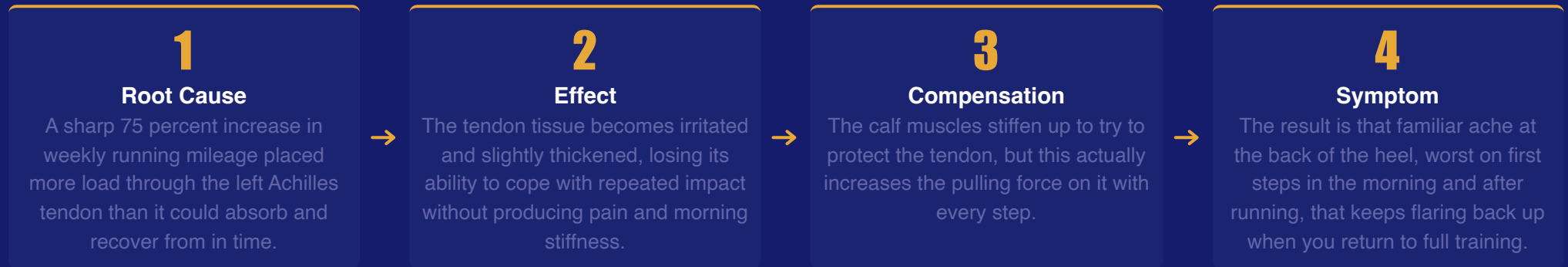
Seven hours on your feet in a classroom keeps the calf and Achilles under low-level continuous load, leaving less recovery capacity for training on top.

CLINICAL ASSESSMENT

Alex, your symptom pattern is very consistent with irritation of the left Achilles tendon, the thick rope-like cord that connects your calf muscles to your heel bone. The classic signs are all here: pain at the back of the heel that is worst on those first few steps in the morning, eases once you are moving, then grumbles again after a run. The fact that this came on after jumping from 20km to 35km per week in just four weeks is the key piece of the picture. That is a 75 percent increase in load in a short time, and the Achilles does not adapt that quickly. Your symptoms also suggest the calf muscles themselves, particularly the gastrocnemius and soleus (the two muscles that make up the bulk of your lower leg), are tight and overworked. These feed directly into the Achilles, so when they are fatigued and stiff, extra stress transfers to the tendon. The morning stiffness, the fact that heat and stretching ease it, and the way it settles with rest all point in the same direction. This is the same area that grumbled two years ago, which tells me the tendon has a history of being sensitive to load spikes. The good news is that with the right approach it responds very well to targeted loading. With 14 weeks to your half marathon, the timing is tight but workable.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CONDITION

Here is a simple breakdown of what is happening in your body and why you are experiencing these symptoms. Understanding the cause helps you stay motivated through the rehab process.



The Achilles tendon is the thick band that runs down the back of your lower leg and anchors into your heel bone. It has to handle enormous forces during running, sometimes several times your body weight with every stride. When you increase your mileage too quickly, the tendon does not have time to remodel and strengthen. The internal fibres get irritated and a little disorganised, which is what creates that deep aching and stiffness.

The morning stiffness you feel is because the tendon stiffens up overnight when there is no movement. Those first few steps are the worst because you are stretching a stiff, slightly irritated structure cold. Once you have walked around for a few minutes, blood flow increases and the tendon warms up, which is why it eases off. The fact that it comes back after a long run or a full day on your feet is the tendon telling you it has hit its load limit for the day.

The important thing to understand is that this does not mean the tendon is about to snap or that it is seriously damaged. Tendons are quite robust, but they are also slow to adapt compared to muscles. The plan below works by gradually building the tendon's load tolerance back up through specific exercises, while temporarily reducing the things that keep winding it up. Done consistently, this approach has a very good track record.

With consistent rehab, most people with this pattern see clear improvement within 4 to 6 weeks and are back to full running by 8 to 12 weeks. Your half marathon in 14 weeks is a realistic target if you follow this plan and do not rush the loading.

Your recovery is broken into 4 phases. Each builds on the last. Move to the next phase only when you meet the progression criteria. The timelines are guidelines, not deadlines. Everyone recovers at a different pace.

START HERE

01 ACUTE MANAGEMENT

Weeks 1-2

Rest and protect

Reduce irritation in the left Achilles and calf, and keep you moving without making things worse.

MOVE ON WHEN

Pain dropping and sleeping better

02 MOBILITY & FLEXIBILITY

Weeks 2-4

Get moving again

Restore full calf and ankle movement on the left side and reduce morning stiffness.

MOVE ON WHEN

Full range of motion with no tingling

03 STRENGTHENING

Weeks 3-8

Build strength

Build the load tolerance of the left Achilles tendon and calf muscles so they can handle running and netball again.

MOVE ON WHEN

Exercises pain-free for a full week

04 RETURN TO ACTIVITY

Weeks 6-12

Back to full activity

Gradually return to full running, netball, and a full day on your feet at work, with your half marathon as the target finish line.

MOVE ON WHEN

All return criteria met (see checklist)

Most people see significant improvement within the first 4 weeks.

Protect & Reduce Pain

This first phase is all about calming things down. Your body needs time to settle before we start building strength. Follow these daily actions to reduce pain, protect the area, and set yourself up for recovery. Tick each item as you complete it.

PAIN MANAGEMENT

- **Ice after activity:** Wrap an ice pack in a cloth and apply to the back of your left heel for 15 minutes after any walking or running.
- **Heat in the morning:** Before your first steps, warm the back of your left heel with a heat pack for 5 to 10 minutes to ease morning stiffness.
- **Heel raise in shoes:** Place a small heel wedge or folded insole in your left shoe to reduce the stretch on the Achilles while it settles.

ACTIVITY MODIFICATIONS

- **Supportive footwear all day:** Wear your running trainers or most cushioned shoes in the classroom. Avoid flat shoes entirely this week.
- **Planned sit-down breaks:** Sit down for at least 5 minutes every hour. Use reading time or small group work as your cue.

SLEEP

Keep sleeping on your side as you do now. Avoid tucking your feet into a pointed-toe position overnight, as this shortens the calf and stiffens the Achilles. Loosen the bedding at the foot of the bed if it pushes your foot down.

EVENING ROUTINE

~5 MIN

- **Seated heel raise and lower:** Sit in a chair, rise onto both toes slowly, then lower. 15 reps, slow and controlled.
- **Towel calf stretch:** Loop a resistance band under your left foot, pull gently back, hold 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.
- **Ankle circles:** Sit with your left foot off the floor, draw slow large circles in both directions, 10 each way.

01

THAT'S A TASTE OF IT

The full plan runs to 17 pages, all personalised to your answers. The remaining pages cover:

- Your full strengthening programme with sets, reps, loads and progressions
- A week-by-week return to sport, training and work
- Self-massage and trigger point release techniques
- Lifestyle and workstation changes specific to your day
- Your weekly schedule and a daily routine card for your phone
- Milestones, red flags, and exactly when to get further help

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