

## Posterior heel pain

Pain at the back of the heel can be from several causes. It usually involves the Achilles tendon. This is the thick “heel cord” that originates from the powerful calf muscles, the gastrocnemius and the deeper soleus muscle.

The pain may radiate up or proximally along the course of the tendon, which could be a sign of a tight muscle or a tear developing. A severe rupture will be associated with a divot or knot along the tendon as well as swelling and difficulty standing on tip toes. This may require casting or surgical correction.

A bump on the back of the heel that may swell and make shoes uncomfortable is a Haglund’s deformity or a “pump bump.” This is a bone spur on the corner of the back and top of the calcaneus or heel bone. It hurts because the tendon rubs against it as it pulls back and forth as the heel is raised. This can be treated with heel counters, therapy or surgery to file down the bone spur.

Other conditions such as calcifications within the tendon, bursitis, pinched nerves or other problems can cause pain at the back of the heels. If you have such a problem, a thorough exam by a podiatrist can provide a solution to the dilemma.