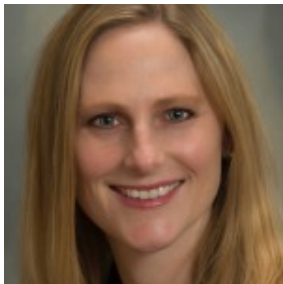


Tendonitis common with winter activities

By Alison Ganong

As we gear up for outdoor winter activities, the potential for sports-related injuries stacks up. Tendonitis is a common winter sports injury.

Tendons are bands of fibrous connective tissue that attach muscles to the bones. Micro tears in the tendon can lead to irritation and inflammation known as tendonitis. If the area is not well rested or treated, the tendon starts to degenerate and can turn into unhealthy scar tissue that does not perform or move well.



Alison Ganong

Injuries to tendons are commonly caused by minor stress and repetitive overuse activities, but can also occur from a sudden injury. Symptoms include pain and stiffness where the tendon and bone attach and is especially aggravated by physical activity. Common sites for tendinitis include the shoulder, elbow, wrist, hip, knee, and ankle.

Ways to prevent tendinitis:

- Don't do too much too soon.

Avoid repetitive strain on the tendon. With the arrival of snow, it can be exciting to try a new sport or return to an

activity you haven't done for months. The body is not ready to dive into snow sports as if it were the middle of the season. Ease into activities and, as a general rule, do not increase your intensity or duration in any one sport by more than 10 percent per week.

- Practice using correct form.

Avoid overloading the tendons. Warm up and go slow when starting new activities or a new season of activities. Before hitting the slopes, a ski or snowboard lesson can ensure your technique is safe and sound.

- Follow a well-planned resistance training program.

Light resistance exercises in the gym may help prevent or treat tendinosis. Use lighter weights and higher repetitions to gradually build up tendon strength and length. It helps to discuss this with a sports medicine specialist and to work with a physical therapist to know when and how to start these exercises. This training program should only begin when your pain subsides or improves.

- Be aware of aging tendon issues.

Be patient as your tendons may not bounce back from overtraining or injury the way they did when you were younger. Tendons gradually lose their elasticity with age which makes anyone over the age of 40 more prone to tendonitis.

If you suspect you have tendinitis or tendinosis, consult a medical professional for treatment options. Options may include modification of activities, a sports rehabilitation program, or regenerative medicine techniques, such as injections of platelet rich-plasma and stem-cell therapy.

Alison Ganong is a board-certified physical medicine and rehabilitation physician who specializes in interventional sports medicine and spine care. She works at the Tahoe Center for Orthopedics.