

INFORMATION SHEET: SHOCKWAVE THERAPY





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What is Shockwave Therapy?

Shockwave therapy is a modern and highly effective treatment option in orthopaedic and rehabilitation medicine. The term shockwave refers to mechanical pressure pulses that expand as a wave in the body. In modern pain therapy, shockwave energy is conducted from the point of origin to the painful body regions, where it applies its healing capacities.

The first medical treatment with shockwaves was lithotripsy. This allowed focused shockwaves to essentially dissolve kidney stones without surgical intervention. Today, over 98% of all kidney stones are treated with this technology. The use of shockwaves to treat tendon related pain began in the early 1990s.

What conditions can Shockwave Therapy treat?

The most common conditions that Shockwave Therapy can treat include:

- Tennis Elbow – Painful inflammation of the tendon attachment on the lateral elbow
- Shoulder Pain – Painful limitation of shoulder movement
- Golfer's Elbow – Painful inflammation of the tendon attachment on the medial elbow
- Burtis Trochanterica – Painful periostitis of the hip
- Patella Tip Syndrome – Inflammation of the point of attachment of the patellar ligament
- Shin Splints – Inflammation of the tibial edge due to excessive strain
- Achilles Tendonitis – Painful irritation of the Achilles tendon
- Painful Heel / Plantar Fasciitis – Painful, mostly chronic inflammation of the heel

What usually happens in a Shockwave Therapy appointment?

Your therapist will discuss your symptoms with you and locate the source of pain. They will then mark the area intended for the Shockwave Therapy. A gel is applied to optimise the contact between the shock wave device and your skin. The handpiece delivers shock waves to the pain area for just a few minutes depending on the condition. The energy waves then stimulates the bodies natural healing.

The treatment itself doesn't hurt, but some people have reported some discomfort in the muscle for a day or two after the treatment. However this is the nature of the treatment as the shockwaves are damaging the muscle to a state that it will naturally repair itself to full health. However most of the time patients say they have little or no problems following their treatment



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How does Shockwave Therapy work?

Shock wave therapy, also known as Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy (ESWT), is a clinically proven and highly effective treatment for chronic soft tissue injuries and certain bone conditions. An extracorporeal shockwave is defined as a non-invasive, non-electrical high energy sound wave that passes through the body via a hand-held probe. The shock waves produce a rapid increase in blood circulation to the target area and will break down fibrous scar tissue which builds up over time, especially with chronic conditions.

The removal of scar tissue is the key to why shock wave therapy is so effective. Unlike normal elasticated tissue, scar tissue is non-elastic and will prevent normal movement and function, thereby weakening the unaffected tissue surrounding it, often causing further damage and pain.

By increasing circulation and removing scar tissue, shock wave therapy will stimulate cell regeneration and promote normal healing and rapid reduction of pain. Normal function can then be restored.

Can Shockwave Therapy help with Achilles Tendinopathy?

An article in 2007 studied 75 patients who had Achilles tendinopathy. They found that no treatment (a wait and see policy) had zero effect on the symptoms, whereas eccentric loading and shockwave therapy showed comparable results. They suggested that the combination of shockwave and eccentric loading yielded significant results in the symptoms that patients felt, thus making it an ideal conservative option.

A more recent paper, carried out a randomized, double blind, placebo trial. The 48 patients were assigned to either receive shockwave therapy or a sham alternative (fake). After 8 and 12 weeks, better results were seen in the intervention group (shockwave therapy), therefore supporting the use of shockwave therapy in those with chronic achilles tendinopathy.

Recent improvements in technology have meant that shockwave therapy is an affordable option for the majority of patients, allowing an alternative option to surgery.

How many sessions of Shockwave Therapy will I need?

This depends on the nature of the condition being treated, but it ranges between 1-3 sessions. More than 3 sessions in a set period will be doing more damage than good, this is also why we offer a package which includes 3 sessions as standard. We usually like to leave you for 2-3 months after your third session providing there is some positive change, which your clinician can detect in your condition.



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What to do after your first session...

After your first session of shockwave it is important to keep active. Your clinician will advise you on specific things to do and things to avoid. Here are some general pieces of advice.

Do

- Keep active
- Report back anything you may be concerned about
- Expect some bruising and soreness
- Carry on with exercises given to you by your clinician

Don't

- Run
- Take part in explosive sports/movements
- Take anti-inflammatories
- Use ice

Your next step

At PERFECT BALANCE CLINIC, we have extensive experience in Shockwave Therapy. We are a multi-disciplinary team of consultants and therapists who are dedicated to curing pain and getting you fully fit in the shortest possible time.

If you are experiencing pain and would like to learn more about Shockwave Therapy, give us a call and we will ask you a few questions that will help us provide some immediate advice and fast-track you to our most appropriate therapist. Usually we can arrange an appointment within the next day or so, possibly even sooner.

Contacting PERFECT BALANCE CLINIC is the fastest way to get back on your feet pain free. Email us at info@perfectbalanceclinic.com or call our team on 0800 0724 012 and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Important notification: We provide this information as a resource to ensure the best and most up-to-date research and information is at hand. The information offered may be used only as a guideline to help you understand your condition, your treatment and your body. Whilst the general guidelines of medicine are evidence based every person presents a unique challenge and that is why we recommend you visit our team for more specific information with regards to your condition or treatment.

Please contact us for information if you're worried about any aspect of your body in relation to the information you have read here. Perfect Balance Clinic accept no legal responsibility for any loss of damages if readers decide to not take our information sheet and visit our team for more specialist information with regards to their individual problem. The information provided is provided at your own risk and where possible is evidence based and taken from multiple various sources referenced where indicated.