



LAKE COMO - ITALY



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## Ask A Physio: Can Stress Affect Pain?

A common fear for patients when discussing pain is the idea that their symptoms are 'all in their head' or that they won't be believed either by friends, family, therapists or workplace. This fear can be worse when there appears to be no obvious cause for their pain or it has been present for a long time.

### What is pain?

Many of the models used in the past to explain pain lead us to believe that the intensity of pain will always be proportional to the severity of an injury. The experience of pain is always real and usually distressing. However, pain is a warning system used by our nervous system to alert us to danger, not a direct indicator of damage done. This is a subtle, yet important distinction meaning that the experience of pain can be influenced by many different factors and not exclusively tissue damage.

### How can stress impact pain?

Part of the role of your nervous system is to sort through a huge

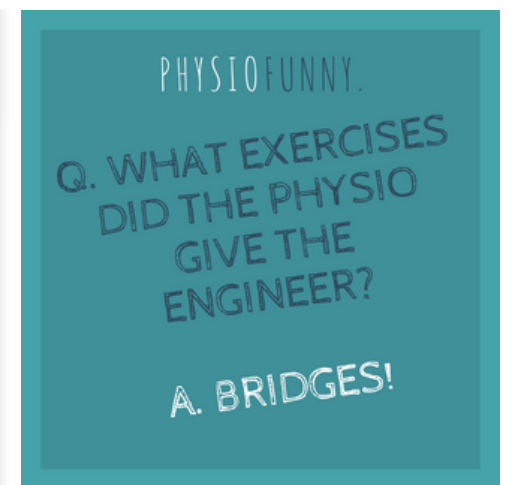
amount of sensory input and interpret it in a meaningful way. When pain is considered to be a serious threat to the body, the intensity of the pain will be worse.

### This can happen in many situations, for example:

- The source of the pain is not well understood, leading to fear that the pain might be something very serious.
- The nervous system is in a state of hyper-arousal, such as when you are stressed or tired.
- The pain or injury could have a significant impact on your quality of life, career, relationships or hobbies.
- The injury occurred through a traumatic event such as a car accident.

### What does this mean for my treatment?

Along with all our more traditional treatments, we also know that stress reduction strategies, mindfulness and addressing any emotional trauma associated with pain can all help to aid recovery and improve quality of life. The good news is that taking a holistic approach to managing pain can have great outcomes, getting you back to the activities you love faster. Your physiotherapist is a great person to speak to about pain management strategies so you can get the most out of your life while dealing with long-term pain.



## Brain Teasers

How do you make the number 7 even without addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division?

### Tips For Managing Knee Pain

Knees are affected by dynamics at the ankle and hip. Wearing supportive shoes can be an easy way to improve knee pain.



# Achilles Tendon Tears

## What is it?

The Achilles tendon is a band of fibrous tissue located at the back of the ankle. Its main role is to connect the calf muscles to the heel of the foot. This tendon is the largest tendon in the body and when it tightens, as the calf muscles contract, it pulls the heel allowing you to stand on tiptoe or to point your foot.

Achilles tendon tears commonly occur in athletes, however, this injury can affect anyone and surprisingly, a complete tear is actually more common than a partial tear.

These tears are commonly located at the part of the tendon where there is poor blood flow approximately 6cm above its attachment to the heel. Since there is poor blood supply, this part of the tendon is both vulnerable to injury and slow to heal

## What are the Symptoms?

Primarily, an Achilles tendon tear will cause difficulty in activities such as walking, running and jumping. Other signs and symptoms of an Achilles tendon tear include:

- A loud pop or snap is heard
- Sudden and severe pain at the back of the calf or ankle

- Feeling of having been kicked in the calf
- There is a gap between the tendon and the heel (about 2 inches above the heel)
- Swelling and stiffness followed by weakness and bruising
- Difficulty walking
- Standing on tiptoe may be impossible

## What Causes It?

Anyone can tear their Achilles tendon if the tendon is subject to excessive force or overstretching, however there are some factors that can increase your risk of injury. The most common activities that cause this injury are running and jumping.

The Achilles tendon can thin and weaken both as we age and also if it is not used. As a result of this weakening, it becomes prone to injury like tear or rupture with less force or stretching required before an injury occurs. A tear of the Achilles is often observed in people with pre-existing Achilles tendinitis. Other factors such as certain medications including antibiotics and steroids and some illnesses like diabetes and arthritis can also result in weakness of the tendon, increasing injury risk. Being obese is also a risk factor as excess weight puts additional strain on the tendon.

## How Can Physiotherapy Help?

Treatment for Achilles tendon tear will depend on the patient's age, how severe

the injury is and the patient's activity level. For young people especially athletes, they opt to have surgery while older people choose conservative treatments including physiotherapy.

Physiotherapy treatment for an Achilles tendon tear will involve exercises to strengthen the calf muscles and the Achilles tendon and exercises for stability. Many people are able to return to their normal activities within 4 to 6 months. Functional rehabilitation is also part of the program as it focuses on how you coordinate your body and how to move it. The aim of functional rehabilitation is to help you return to your highest level of performance.

**None of the information in this newsletter is a replacement for proper medical advice. Always see a medical professional for advice on your injury.**



Answers: 1. Remove the letter 'S'

## Ingredients:

- 2 tins diced Tomatoes
- 1 small Red Onion, diced
- 2 small carrots, diced
- 1 handful Fresh Basil
- 2 cloves of Garlic
- 2 cloves of Star Anise
- 2 cups Vegetable Stock
- 2 cups Water
- 1/2 cup Pearl Barley
- 100g Fresh Parmesan
- 2 Tbsp. Olive Oil
- Salt and Pepper

## Tomato, Basil and Barley Soup



1. Heat olive oil in a large pot on medium heat. Add diced onion, carrots, basil and garlic and cook until onions begin to soften. Soak barley in a separate pot of cold water for 10 minutes and set aside.
2. Add tomatoes, vegetable stock, water and star anise to the pot and bring to boil, stirring occasionally.
3. Drain barley and add to the soup mix. Reduce heat and simmer for about 30-40 minutes, add salt and pepper to taste. Remove from heat and serve while hot.

**Garnish with basil and Parmesan cheese**

  
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