

# Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy (ESWT)

At UW Medicine Sports Medicine Center



*This handout explains the treatment called Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy (ESWT), and how it is done at the UW Medicine Sports Medicine Center at Husky Stadium.*

## What is shockwave therapy?

*Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy (ESWT)* is a safe treatment that does not require surgery. It uses shock waves, which are high-energy sound waves, to help injured tissues heal and to reduce pain. ESWT can help people who have *chronic* (long-lasting) tendon injuries or bone stress injuries that have not gotten better with other treatments like rest, physical therapy, or medicine.

Shockwave treatments at the Sports Medicine Center are done by Board Certified Sports Medicine Physicians.

## What conditions can shockwave treat?

At the Sports Medicine Center, ESWT is used to treat chronic tendon injuries (also called tendinopathies) in different parts of the body, including:

- Shoulder (rotator cuff)
- Elbow (golfer's elbow and tennis elbow)
- Hip (greater trochanteric pain)
- Knee (patellar tendon and quadriceps tendon injuries)
- Foot and ankle (Achilles tendon and plantar fascia injuries)

ESWT may also be used in some cases to treat stubborn bone stress injuries that are slow to heal.



***ESWT is used to treat chronic tendon injuries.***

## How is the ESWT done?

- First, you will be placed in a comfortable position so the doctor can easily reach the injured body part.
- Next, the shockwave machine is placed on the injured body part.
- The doctor slowly increases the strength of the machine until you feel mild to moderate pain, which helps the body part start healing.
- The doctor may use two kinds of shockwaves, called focused shockwave and radial shockwave, which use different machine attachments.
- Sometimes, ultrasound is used to help mark the exact area of the body part that needs treatment.
- The whole appointment usually takes about 30 minutes.

Most patients are scheduled for four treatment sessions, with 1 session each week.



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## How do I prepare for ESWT?

- **Starting 1 week before your ESWT**, stop taking all *nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs* (NSAIDs). Some of these are ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn), Celebrex, Diclofenac, Meloxicam, and indomethacin. Talk with your care team if you have questions or concerns about whether to keep taking any of your medicines.
- Most people can drive after their ESWT therapy. If you are worried about driving, bring a driver with you or plan another way to get home.

## After Your Treatment

- You may have some mild soreness for a few days.
- You can rest for 1 day, but usually patients can return to normal activities.
- **For 2 weeks after your shockwave therapy:** avoid NSAID medications

## Can anyone get ESWT?

- ESWT is usually safe, well tolerated, and can be a good noninvasive treatment option for long-lasting tendon injuries and other conditions.
- A consultation with a Sports Medicine Physician is recommended to discuss shockwave therapy as part of a complete rehabilitation program and to make sure it is the right treatment option for you.

## Is ESWT therapy covered by insurance?

Usually, ESWT is not covered by insurance. Please call our clinic at 206.598.3294 (option 2) and one of our staff members can help with our pricing.

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

- **UW Medicine Sports Medicine Center:** Call 206.598.3294 and press 2.