

Is a walking boot more effective than a cast for Achilles tendon rupture?

THE PROBLEM

Achilles tendon rupture occurs when the tissue that connects the calf muscle to the heel bone tears, causing pain, inflammation and an inability to push the foot down. It is a common sporting injury, with more than 11,000 cases per year in the UK. Most are treated with a plaster cast, however researchers wanted to find out if a boot-style brace which helps them walk on the injured foot could be used.



THE STUDY

The UK STAR trial involved 540 participants from 39 UK NHS hospitals, who were randomly assigned a plaster cast or boot, to compare the two. Participants completed surveys on function, pain, quality of life and complications including the tendon tearing again.



THE RESULTS

Patients' quality of life was similar in the longer-term whether they were treated with a cast or a boot. However, patients with the boot had better early function with no increase in the risk of further tendon damage. The boot was also cheaper for the NHS. Therefore, researchers recommend using a walking boot.



**Ask your doctor or nurse about research or find studies seeking
volunteers at www.bepartofresearch.uk**