

Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy (ESWT)

What is ESWT?

Extracorporeal (outside the body) Shockwave Therapy is a non-invasive technique designed to treat causes of chronic musculoskeletal pain without the need for injections, medication or surgery. Shockwaves are low energy sound waves that are delivered to the treatment area. The therapy initiates a healing process at the site of pain to speed up your body's healing process. In other words, ESWT provides improved blood circulation and increased metabolism to the area to encourage tissue repair. It may also help to dissolve calcium deposits that may be contributing to your pain.

Why do I need ESWT?

ESWT is usually used to treat chronic tendon problems for which symptoms have been ongoing for more than 6 months and have not been significantly reduced after completion of a course of conservative treatment such as physiotherapy, podiatry or specialist treatment. ESWT should help reduce your pain so you can go back to your normal activities and carry out your exercises and rehabilitation more easily.

Chronic pain is often caused by degeneration, stiffening, calcification, or strain on the muscles or tendons.

Who has made the decision?

Your GP, specialist or physiotherapist has referred you for treatment.

What are the risks?

Any adverse reaction to ESWT is rare and treatment is considered low risk. Reported complications include bruising, pain, and localised skin reddening, these normally get better with time. There is also a very small risk of tendon or fascia rupture. Treatment may not always be successful.

What are the alternatives?

The alternatives include: continuing physiotherapy/specialist treatment with exercises, activity modification, footwear adaption or splints. Pain relief medication or in certain cases guided injection of local anaesthetic/steroid can be used. No treatment is also an option.

Are there any contraindications to ESWT?

ESWT should not be performed in patients who;

- Are pregnant
- Have had a steroid injection to the area in the last 3 months
- Are under the age of 18
- Have an infection or wound at the treatment site
- Have cancer at or near the treatment site.

Please inform the department if any of the above apply to you to discuss alternatives.

Prior to ESWT you must tell the Radiographer if;

- You have a cardiac pacemaker
- Are taking anti-coagulant (blood thinning) medication
- Have altered sensation; hypersensitivity or neuropathy (reduced sensation) in the treatment area.
- Are on antibiotics
- Have an underlying joint replacement or have had any operation to the treatment area.

How do I prepare for an ESWT?

Three sessions are required to complete the treatment. These are carried out approximately a week apart. You will be sent a series of appointments, you will need to be available for all of these appointments to begin treatment and ensure optimal treatment benefit (please contact us prior to your first treatment if you are not available for all treatment dates).

You should not take any non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen, for two weeks before and throughout your treatment period. If you are unsure if any of your medicines contain NSAIDs then please check with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. Wear comfortable clothing that can allow easy access to the area.

Who will be performing the ESWT?

Your treatment will be carried out by Radiographers who have undertaken specialist training to perform the procedure.

How is ESWT carried out?

The Radiographer will ask you to complete a consent to treatment form confirming the agreed area to be treated. The Radiographer will locate the cause of pain/symptoms by palpation (with your assistance). Gel is applied to the treatment area. The treatment is delivered via a handheld device which is placed on the skin surface and shock waves are directed to the area affected

or calcified for the length of the procedure. The treatment is normally no longer than five minutes, however please allow up to half an hour for your appointment so that the treatment can be discussed with you beforehand.

As shockwaves are used, expect some noise during the treatment.

Will it hurt?

There may be some local discomfort during treatment.

What happens after the procedure?

Although you may feel some improvement during the treatment process, healing normally occurs around six weeks afterwards. However, you may not notice full benefits for up to 3 months after treatment. Occasionally for the first one to two days after treatment some discomfort can be experienced, this should pass within the week. You may use simple painkillers if in pain. Do not use anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen or use ice on the treated area as both will affect the body's inflammatory and healing process stimulated by the shockwave treatment. There is no need to alter your day to day activities. The clinician that referred you for treatment will provide follow up care as appropriate.

Following the treatment, you may be asked to complete an outcome questionnaire to document your response to treatment and any changes to the pain you experience.

Where will it take place?

In the Medical Imaging Department, Royal Devon University Hospital (Wonford).

Finally

If you find reading this leaflet difficult or you do not understand what it means for you, please call **01392 402336**, selecting option **1**, then option **1**, and we can talk it through or alternatively you can email us **rduh.radiologyappointments@nhs.net**.

Some of your questions should have been answered by this leaflet, but remember that this is only a starting point for discussion about your treatment with the care team looking after you. Make sure you are satisfied that you have received enough information about the procedure, before you sign the consent form.

Please note if you have had a steroid injection within the past 12 weeks, we will not be able to carry out the shockwave therapy. Please contact us on **01392 402336, option 1, option 1**.

How to get to the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital at Wonford

Please refer to the enclosed "Welcome to the Medical Imaging Department" leaflet or use the Trusts website for the latest information.
www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/our-sites

For more information on the Medical Imaging Department, please visit our website:
www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/services/radiology-x-ray-and-medical-imaging

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Radiologists.

This information can be offered in other formats on request, including a language other than English and Braille.

RD&E (Eastern Services) main switchboard: 01392 411611 NDDH (Northern Services) main switchboard: 01271 322577

For Royal Devon services log on to: <https://royaldevon.nhs.uk>

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