

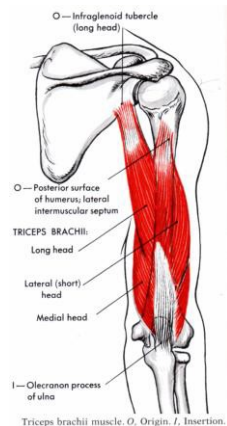


## Triceps Tendon Injuries

**What is the Triceps?** The triceps is a tripinnate (three part-long, lateral, medial) muscle. It extends the elbow and allows the arm to be held in space. The triceps originates on the humerus and attaches to the olecranon process of the ulna.

**What injuries happen to the triceps?** The triceps tendon can get tendonitis or a frank rupture. Both can look similar. Often a rupture is not 'complete' and can confuse the diagnosis.

**Who gets triceps injuries?** Most often males that participate in aggressive activity. Commonly weight lifting, football or heavy manual labor. It is usually caused by an eccentric load on an outstretched arm.



**What is triceps tendonitis?** Inflammation of the triceps as it inserts on the olecranon tip. This causes pain on the tip of the elbow and weakness. This is likely not an inflammatory state, but a degenerative one (like tennis elbow and golfer's elbow).

**How do we make the diagnosis of triceps tendonitis?** Weakness and pain on physical examination are clues to the diagnosis. Plain x-rays are essential along with an MRI to rule out a tear.

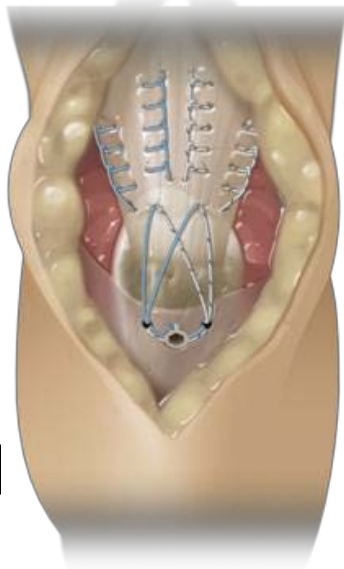
**What is the treatment of triceps tendonitis?** Rehabilitation with physical therapy is essential. The patient should avoid aggressive activities as well.



**How do we make a diagnosis of a triceps rupture?** Loss of extension strength of the elbow is helpful for diagnosis but not always present. Often, the triceps is incompletely ruptured, and some extension is possible. An MRI or ultrasound will make the definitive diagnosis.



**How do we treat a triceps rupture?** In those with less than a 50% rupture in children and the non-athlete, we can treat with physical therapy with good results. Those with significant ruptures or in athletes are treated with surgical repair.



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