



Tennis Leg Revisited

This entry documents my own experience with “Tennis Leg”. As per my previous entry, tennis leg is a tear of the calf muscle known as the medial head of the gastrocnemius. This injury typically happens to the 40+ athlete when they plant their foot to accelerate and they feel like something hit them in the leg. The classic story is that they turn around to see what “hit” them. The typical athlete is the “weekend warrior” who exercises vigorously, but does so only on occasion.

My personal experience is a little different. I exercise everyday. Most days involve running, cycling, doing the stepmill or playing tennis for at least an hour a day. On this day I made a mistake. I went out for a nice hour long run through Ute Park around 8 AM. I ran nice and easy, but it was atypically hot for the early AM and I got dehydrated. Following my run, I went and played a competitive tennis match with a friend. I was running all over the court for about an hour and a half, and during one particular point I planted and accelerated to the net to retrieve a ball. My calf cramped and I stepped through the cramp and I felt it tear. I immediately could not walk. It was difficult, if not impossible, to “toe off” during normal walking.

I immediately iced my leg and continued to do so for the first few days. I placed a heel lift in my shoe which made it much easier to walk. Luckily, it was not a complete tear and after a few days I could get around as long as I did not “toe off” during walking.

After 4 days, I began rehabilitating it by cycling and using our Elliptigo. I also did some gentle stretching and continued to ice as much as possible. By doing this early, I was able to get back to activity pretty quickly. The point here is to work your way back by gently stressing the muscle without overdoing it.





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The Elliptigo is an amazing rehabilitation tool for runners or athletes with injuries of this nature. It is also a great tool for cross training as it allows you to get an amazing workout without over-stressing your joints, tendons or muscles.

By taking this step-wise approach, I was able to stress the muscle/tendon without overdoing it which stimulated a healing response. I am now just 3 1/2 weeks out from injury and I am back to running and playing tennis. Granted, my injury was probably minor on the scale of how these injuries present, but by taking this gradual approach I recovered rather quickly.

My error was overdoing it in the first place. I was dehydrated and fatigued and should've been smarter. I should have rehydrated better after my run and I should have also known that I was fatigued and been more careful.