

## Radial Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy

As medical technologies improve, so do the tools used by your local physiotherapists! **Extracorporeal shockwave therapy**, or **ESWT** for short, is a great example of this. Shock wave technology began being used 40 years ago as a non-invasive treatment for kidney stones, and has recently been adapted and used to effectively treat many soft tissue injuries around the body today. With the help of a trained physiotherapist, **ESWT** can be safely used to help with many different injuries and conditions, regardless of how long they have existed.

On the face of it, **shockwave therapy** can sound intimidating. While the treatment can be intense for some people, typically patients describe the treatment as feeling like an elastic band snapping against the skin, or a small jack hammer tapping deep in the treatment area. These feelings are good ways to understand how **ESWT** works to help you heal. With each “pulse” of the machine, a **small shockwave** is transmitted across the skin and into the body from a small piston. **It is this shockwave that helps break up scar tissue, increase blood flow in the area, and stimulate the body’s normal healing processes to help injuries heal.** **ESWT** has the added benefit of being able to treat “deeper” body parts that other physiotherapy machines are unable to reach, and as a result can be a great help with chronic injuries that just seem to stick around.

Scientific studies have continued to show that **ESWT** can help increase the rate of healing of injuries, decrease pain, and improve joint mobility when properly applied at many areas of the body. Issues that are commonly managed with **ESWT** include...

- Plantar fasciitis
- Calcified tendons (in shoulders especially)
- Tendonitis of the rotator cuff in the shoulder
- Golfer and tennis elbow (medial and lateral epicondylitis)
- Jumper’s knees (patellar tendonitis)
- Achilles tendonitis
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Some arthritis joints
- IT band pain or restrictions

While you can feel a little sore after a treatment, you are usually able to continue with day to day activities and exercises as normal. Using simple at home stretches and strengthening exercises while being treated with **ESWT** can give you ever better chances of success and are often prescribed following treatments.

Matthew Ward  
MScPT, BScK, Registered Physiotherapist  
Citadel Physiotherapy