

Key component in tendon injury discovered

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The superficial flexor tendon stretches twice as much as a human achilles tendon

Scientists at the University of Liverpool have found a mechanism in the leg that is crucial in preventing tendon injury in horses and human athletes.

The research, published in the Royal Society journal, *Interface*, shows that a component of [tendons](#), known as the interfascicular matrix (IFM) is essential for their function.

[Tendon injury](#) in horses is as high as 43% in the 16,000 horses in racing training each year. It is just as common in humans and can herald the end of an athlete's career.

Researchers at Liverpool and Queen Mary University, London, found that the IFM, previously thought to be unimportant in tendon function was essential to the extension of the superficial digital flexor tendon in horses. They found that tendons with a stiffer IFM were not able to stretch as far as they normally would.

Future research may focus on potential diagnostic tests to see whether some horses and humans are more susceptible to tendon injury than others.

More information: rsif.royalsocietypublishing.org/

Provided by University of Liverpool

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