
Plantar Fasciitis

Information from Foot Solutions

Do you suffer from intense heel or arch pain? It could be Plantar Fasciitis. Plantar fasciitis is a very painful injury, and the most common cause of heel pain. The plantar fascia is a thick band of tissue that runs along the bottom surface of the foot connecting the heel bone to the ball of the foot. Excessive stretching of the tissue while running or walking can cause tiny tears that lead to irritation, inflammation and pain on the bottom of the heel, the arch of the foot or both locations. If left untreated, plantar fasciitis can cause other conditions like heel spurs. Our heel bone is the largest bone in the foot and absorbs the most amount of shock and pressure. Plantar fasciitis is most painful with your first steps in the morning or after a long rest because the plantar fascia contracts and becomes less flexible while you are off your feet. Just like muscle tissue, the plantar fascia contracts and becomes less flexible when it is cold and inactive. The pain may decrease as the day progresses and the plantar fascia is stretched and warmed up with use. However, the pain may return after long periods of standing, walking or running. This is especially common if you are wearing shoes with inadequate arch support.

Symptoms

With Plantar fasciitis, the bottom of your foot usually hurts either on the heel just slightly inward from the center (which is the most common area of pain), or in the arch of your foot (less common), or in both places. The pain is often acute either first thing in the morning or after standing up after being off your feet for a while. Just like muscles, when the plantar fasciia is cold and inactive, it contracts and becomes less flexible. This is what makes that first step out of bed or after resting so painful. After you walk for a while, the tissue warms up making it more pliable and the pain often subsides somewhat.

- Intense pain in the heel and/or arch (of one foot or both)
- Pain with first steps in the morning or after long periods of rest

Causes

- Over-pronation, or excessive rolling inward of the foot while walking, is the most common cause of plantar fasciitis.
- Tight calf muscles or Achilles tendons, the band of tissue that connects the calf muscles to the heel bone
- Flat feet or high arches
- Improperly fitted shoes
- Inadequate arch support
- Standing, walking or running for long periods, especially on hard surfaces
- Excess body weight

Treatment and Prevention

- Stretch your feet and legs regularly, especially before standing after long periods of rest
- Elevate the injured foot
- Ice and massage your foot
- Wear a night splint to keep plantar fascia stretched
- Choose low-impact alternatives to jogging or aerobics
- Lose excess body weight
- Add gel heel cups
- Add arch supports to your shoes
- Replace shoes that don't fit or provide adequate arch support

Foot Solutions Products

- Supportive athletic, casual or dress shoes
- Rocker soled shoes
- Custom arch supports (orthotics)
- Over-the-counter arch supports (orthotics)
- Night splints
- Massage tube
- Foot massage balls

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