

Dear Patient

Plantar Fasciitis

Probably the most common form of foot pain associated with sport and activity is plantar fasciitis. It may also be referred to as painful heel syndrome, subcalcaneal pain, medial arch sprain, stone bruise and calcaneal periostitis.

WHAT CAUSES PLANTAR FASCIITIS ?

Plantar fasciitis is caused by excessive stress and strain on the plantar fascia and is usually associated with poor support from the bony arch of the foot. This causes the plantar fascia to pull on the bone where it attaches at the heel.

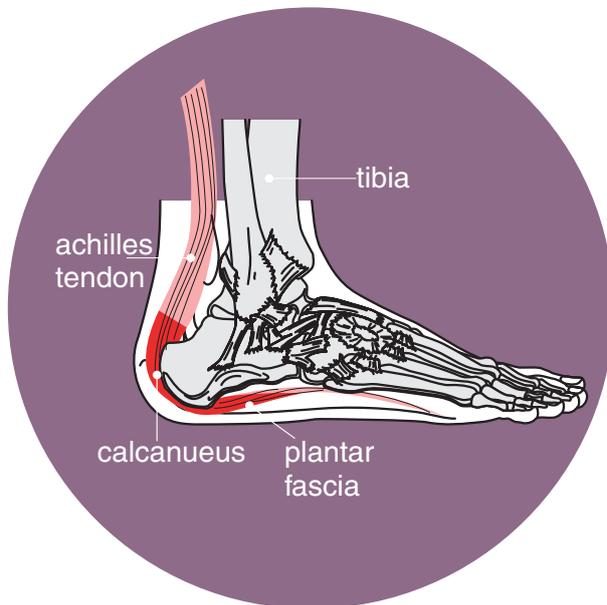
Inflammation of the fascia and irritation of the heel evolve causing pain. This may lead to the development of a bony spur on the heel.

Risk factors for developing plantar fasciitis include an increase in training intensity (especially running), biomechanical abnormalities of the foot (often associated with "flat-footedness"), excessive pronation or rolling of the foot and tight calf muscles.

ANATOMY

The plantar fascia is a thick band of fibrous connective tissue that runs along the bottom of the foot. It attaches to the under surface of the calcaneus (heel bone) and runs under the foot, fanning out to attach to the base of the toes.

The plantar fascia has an important role in stabilising the foot and preparing the foot to "push off" during running.



Above: A lateral view of the foot highlighting the location of the plantar fascia

COMMON SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS

- Pain felt under the heel or along the bottom of foot.
- Soreness, especially with the first few steps in the morning or after sitting for a prolonged period.
- Difficulty placing the heel on the ground.
- Reduced pain with activity which returns at rest.
- Pain aggravated by walking on toes, running up hills and climbing stairs.
- Tenderness to touch under the heel or arch.
- Pain on stretch (when foot and toes are lifted up).

TREATMENT

Treatment is aimed at reducing pain and inflammation, restoring tissue strength and flexibility, reducing tension applied to the plantar fascia, and improving any biomechanical abnormality which may be contributing to the problem.

- Physiotherapy treatment will address all these issues using a variety of techniques. These may include ice or heat and electrotherapy to reduce inflammation, foot taping to reduce stress on plantar fascia and improve foot biomechanics, calf stretches, specific strengthening of foot and leg muscles, mobilisation of the foot and ankle joints to restore normal mobility, massage of the plantar fascia and education and advice to help prevent recurrence.
- You may also be referred to a podiatrist for a thorough lower limb biomechanical assessment and prescription of orthotics. Your doctor may also recommend anti-inflammatory medication.



Taping the foot may help to reduce stress on the plantar fascia, reducing pain.

Disclaimer : The material contained in these pages is intended as a guide only and does not constitute advice or treatment. For further information, please see your qualified health professional.



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