

**SCOTT PRICE D.P.M.**

## ***Plantar Fasciitis is a Common Cause of Heel Pain***

**Plantar Fasciitis or Heel Pain Syndrome is one of the more common foot conditions treated in a podiatry practice. Plantar fasciitis is seen in all areas of the population, in working adults due to standing for prolonged periods of time, in the elderly since they are staying more active and involved in exercise programs, and in the younger population who are involved in more aggressive or competitive sports programs.**

**I recommend seeking treatment when symptoms are not relieved with over the counter anti-inflammatory medications and rest. More than 80% of patients are cured with conservative or non-surgical procedures**

### ***What is the plantar fascia?***

The plantar fascia is a band of tissue, much like a tendon, on the bottom of your foot. It starts at your heel and goes along the bottom of your foot. It attaches to each one of the bones that form the ball of your foot. The plantar fascia works like a rubber band between the heel and the ball of your foot to form the arch of your foot. A pad of fat in your heel covers the plantar fascia to help absorb the shock of walking. Damage to the plantar fascia can be a cause of heel pain.

### ***How will my doctor know if the pain I have is caused by plantar fasciitis?***

Diagnostic testing, such as X-rays, usually is not necessary to diagnose plantar fasciitis, although it may be useful to rule out other potential causes of heel pain. The most common complaint is a dull aching pain with soreness in the heel. Patients sometimes say it feels like a "Stone Bruise". Typically with plantar fasciitis, the pain is worse when first getting out of bed, or is noticeable at the beginning of an activity and gets better as the body warms up. Prolonged standing may cause pain, as well. In more severe cases, the pain may worsen toward the end of the day

### ***What caused my plantar Fasciitis?***

There are a number of possible causes for plantar fasciitis and they often work in combination. Tightness of the foot and calf, improper athletic training, stress on the arch or weakness of the foot are potential causes. Shoes that don't fit, certain play or work actions or overuse (running too fast, too far, too soon) may hurt the plantar fascia. People with low arches, flat feet or high arches are at increased risk of developing plantar fasciitis

Plantar fasciitis, which may cause the heel to hurt, feel hot or swell, is inflammation of the plantar fascia, a thin layer of tough tissue supporting the arch of the foot. Repeated microscopic tears of the plantar fascia cause pain (too much stretch on the plantar fascia). Sometimes plantar fasciitis is called "heel spurs", but this is not always accurate, since bony growths on the heel may or may not be a factor.

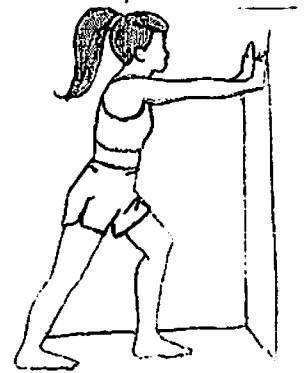
### ***How Long will my treatment take?***

Patients typically see immediate decrease in symptoms with complete resolution in several weeks. Symptoms usually resolve more quickly when the time between the onset of symptoms and the beginning of treatment is as short as possible. Treatment will typically begin with some degree of rest, the use of ice and stretching exercises before and after activity, and an evaluation of the patient's shoes. For pain, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (e.g. aspirin, ibuprofen, etc.) may be recommended. If there is still no improvement, orthotics (customized shoe inserts) are considered and Cortisone injections. Wearing shoes with more support may help decrease stress on the area.

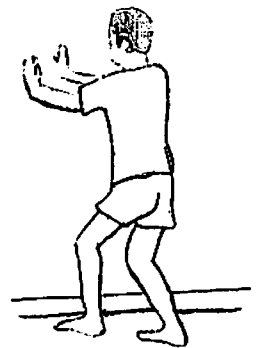
### ***Stretching***

To reduce pain and help prevent future episodes of discomfort, stretch the calves on a regular basis. Stretching exercises for your foot are important. Do the stretches shown here at least twice a day. Don't bounce when you stretch.

The top picture shows the calf stretch. Stand with your hands against a wall and your injured leg behind your other leg. With your injured leg straight, your heel flat on the floor and your foot pointed straight ahead, lean slowly forward, bending the other leg. You should feel the stretch in the middle of your calf. Hold the stretch for 10 to 15 seconds. Repeat the stretch 6 to 8 times.



The bottom picture shows the plantar fascia stretch. To do this stretch, stand straight with your hands against a wall and your injured leg slightly behind your other leg. Keeping your heels flat on the floor, slowly bend both knees. You should feel the stretch in the lower part of your leg. Hold the stretch for 10 to 15 seconds. Repeat the stretch 6 to 8 times.



You can also strengthen your leg muscles by standing on the ball of your foot at the edge of a step and raising up as high as possible on your toes. Relax between toe raises and let your heel fall a little lower than the edge of the step.

Rolling the foot over a tennis ball or 15 ounce can, may also be helpful.

### ***What if conservative treatment does not relieve my pain?***

The newest treatment for plantar fasciitis is a noninvasive procedure called Extra Corporeal Shock Wave Therapy or ESWT. This treatment uses shockwaves, similar to the procedure used to treat kidney stones, to stimulate healing. This is an outpatient procedure performed with monitored local anesthesia. You are usually able to return to your regular activities within a few days of the procedure.

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