



Bristol Community Health

Patient information

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Bristol Community Health

Podiatry Department

Heel Pain



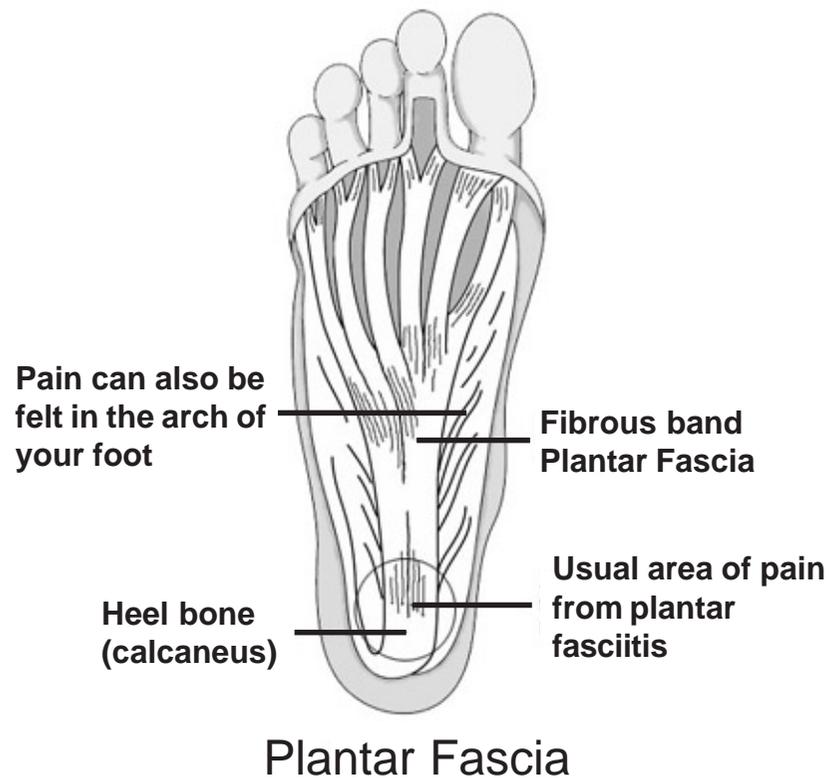
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Heel Pain – Plantar Fasciitis

Your podiatrist has diagnosed you to be suffering from plantar fasciitis (fashee-EYE-tiss). This is an overuse injury affecting the sole or plantar surface of the foot. A diagnosis of plantar fasciitis means you have inflamed the tough, fibrous band of tissue (fascia) connecting your heel bone to the base of your toes.

Every time your foot strikes the ground, the plantar fascia is stretched. You can reduce the strain and stress on the plantar fascia by following these simple instructions:

- Avoid running on hard or uneven ground
- Lose any excess weight
- Wear supportive shoes/trainers
- Wear orthotics/insoles as issued
- Continue to stretch the calf muscles.





- Rolling your foot over a tennis ball or can for 5 minutes.



- As well as stretching your muscles it is important to strengthen them. One method is to do towel curls. To do this place a towel on a smooth surface, place your foot on the towel and pull the towel towards your body. Alternatively put a few marbles on the floor near a cup. Using your toes to pick up the marbles and drop them into the cup.

Symptoms

- Pain is the main symptom. The main source of pain is often around the heel, and may be tender to touch.
- Pain usually eases on resting the foot but is often worse when first used in the morning. Gentle exercise may ease things a little as the day goes by, but a long walk often makes the pain worse.
- Sudden stretching of the sole of the foot may make the pain worse, for example, walking up stairs or on tiptoes.
- You are more likely to suffer from plantar fasciitis if you:
 - are female
 - are overweight
 - have a job that requires a great deal of walking or standing on hard surfaces
 - have tight calf muscles that will restrict your ankle movement
 - have flat feet or very high arches.

If you don't treat plantar fasciitis it may become a chronic condition. This may affect your level of activity.

Symptoms will resolve more quickly if the time between the onset of symptoms and the beginning of treatment is as short as possible. If treatment is delayed the complete resolution of symptoms may take 6-18 months or more

Treatment:

- Rest the foot as much as possible. Avoid running, excess walking or standing, and undue stretching of the sole. Gentle walking and the exercises described below are fine.
- You can also apply ice to the sore area for 20 minutes three or four times a day to relieve your symptoms. For example a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a tea towel.
Anti-inflammatory tablets such as ibuprofen may also help to reduce the pain as well the inflammation.
(Always ask your pharmacist for advice before taking any medication.)
- Typically the pain felt with plantar fasciitis is worse when first getting out of bed. Massaging the foot in the area of the arch and heel before getting out of bed may help.
- Regular gentle stretching of the Achilles tendon and the plantar fascia will help ease the symptoms. This is because most people with plantar fasciitis have a slight tightness of the Achilles tendon. This tends to pull at the back of the heel and have a knock-on effect of keeping the plantar fascia tight.

Stretching Exercises

The following exercises will usually help to ease pain and prevent reoccurrence of plantar fasciitis.

Helpful Hints:



- Stand on a stair (bottom step) with only your toes on the stair. The back two-thirds of your foot should hang off the back of the step. This position should be held for 20 seconds. Repeat 10 times, three times a day. Do not bounce up and down as this will shorten the muscle and not lengthen it.