



Accurate Clinic

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Plantar Fasciitis — plantar Fasciitis is the most common condition of heel pain. This condition occurs when the long fibrous plantar fascia ligament along the bottom of the foot develops tears in the tissue resulting in pain and inflammation. The pain of plantar fasciitis is usually located close to where the fascia attaches to the calcaneus, also known as the heel bone. The condition is often misspelled as: plantar fascitis, plantar fasciatis, planters fasciitis, plantar faciatis, and plantar faciatis. Correctly pronounced it is "plantar fash-eee-eye-tiss".

Plantar fasciitis causes the inflammation of the plantar fascia ligament which runs along the bottom of the foot. The plantar fascia ligament is made of fibrous bands of tissue and runs between the heel bone and your toes and stretches with every step. Inflammation develops when tears occur in the tissue.

The most common complaint from plantar fasciitis is a burning, stabbing, or aching pain in the heel of the foot. Most sufferers will be able to feel it in the morning because the fascia ligament tightens up during the night while we sleep, causing pain to diminish. However, when we climb out of bed and place pressure on the ligament, it becomes taut and pain is particularly acute. Pain usually decreases as the tissue warms up, but may easily return again after long periods of standing or weight bearing, physical activity, or after getting up after long periods of lethargy or sitting down.

In most cases, plantar fasciitis does not require surgery or invasive procedures to stop pain and reverse damage. Conservative treatments are usually all that is required. However, every person's body responds to plantar fasciitis treatment differently and recovery times may vary.

There are a number of plantar fasciitis causes. The plantar fascia ligament is like a rubber band and loosens and contracts with movement. It also absorbs significant weight and pressure. Because of this function, plantar fasciitis can easily occur from a number of reasons. Among the most common is an overload of physical activity or exercise. Athletes are particularly prone to plantar fasciitis and commonly suffer from it. Excessive running, jumping, or other activities can easily place repetitive or excessive stress on the tissue and lead to tears and inflammation, resulting in moderate to severe pain. Athletes who change or increase the difficulty of their exercise routines are also prone to overdoing it and causing damage.

Another common cause of plantar fasciitis is arthritis. Certain types of arthritis can cause inflammation to develop in tendons, resulting in plantar fasciitis. This cause is particularly common among elderly patients. Diabetes is also a factor that can contribute to further heel pain and damage, particularly among the elderly.

Among the most popular factors that contribute to plantar fasciitis is wearing incorrect shoes. In many cases, shoes either do not fit properly, or provide inadequate support or cushioning. While walking or exercising in improper shoes, weight distribution becomes impaired, and significantly stress can be added to the plantar fascia ligament.

Plantar fasciitis is also influenced by the mechanics of the foot. Having conditions such as flat feet, high arches, pronation, or having an abnormal gait (the way in which the foot hits the ground), the fascia tissue can become overworked or stretched abnormally, resulting in tears and inflammation.

With so many causes of plantar fasciitis, there are many risk factors that sufferers should be aware of. Needless to say, activity in sports and regular exercises can place significant stress on the heel and surrounding tissue. In addition, if you have high arches or flat feet, an orthotic shoe insert should be considered to counteract the stress caused by the abnormal mechanics of the foot. Age also plays a factor. As we age, tissue tends to become weaker and more prone to damage. In addition to these common risk factors, weight plays a huge role in damage to the heel. Since our heels absorb much of our body's pressure when we walk, being overweight can easily lead to damage and plantar fasciitis. Pregnancy can also add a few extra pounds. However, the hormonal changes in pregnant women can also cause ligaments and other tissue to relax and become more pliable, which could lead to plantar fasciitis if you are not careful. Those who are on their feet all day due to their occupation are also at risk.



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Finally, wearing high heeled shoes, boots, or other shoes that do not provide proper support around the heel and through the arch can easily lead to plantar fasciitis over time.

In many instances, plantar fasciitis can be treated with home care. Changing your physical activities, resting the foot, and applying ice to the area are common remedies. Taking over the counter medications such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen can help reduce pain and inflammation that may have developed. An orthotic device placed in your shoes can also significantly help to reduce pain. In addition, orthotics can also help promote healing to reverse plantar fasciitis.

If pain from plantar fasciitis continues despite conservative treatments, you may need to visit a doctor or podiatrist. It's important to seek medical advice before heel pain and damage becomes worse. If the condition is allowed to worsen, more serious or invasive forms of treatment may be required to stop pain. A visit to a doctor may reveal other conditions affecting the foot as well, such as Achilles tendonitis, heel spurs, or other heel pain conditions. An x-ray may also be taken, which can reveal the presence of a heel spur. In rare cases surgery may be required to release tension on the plantar fascia, or to remove a portion of a heel spur. But again, most heel pain conditions can be resolved using conservative treatment.

Again, prolonging treatment for plantar fasciitis will cause the condition to become worse. In some cases, a mild aching can evolve into a chronic problem. Another common problem is a change in your gait in order to counteract pain during movement. As a result of these involuntary changes in the foot's mechanics, knee, hip, or back pain can also develop.

Treatment for plantar fasciitis should begin with rest, icing, and over the counter medications. As mentioned above, an orthotic is a device that can be slipped into any pair of shoes and can often relieve pain and help to reverse the damage and occurrence of plantar fasciitis. They do this by adding support to the heel and helping to distribute weight during movement. In addition to orthotics, many people consider night splints for treating this condition. These devices are worn during the night while you sleep, helping to keep the plantar fascia stretched to promote healing. Physical therapy has also become a common option. With this conservative treatment alternative, a physical therapist designs a set of exercises that are intended to address your specific needs in order to promote healing.

More invasive procedures to treat plantar fasciitis are usually sought only after other treatment has failed to produce favorable results. Corticosteroid injections deliver medicine into the injured fascia to reduce pain. However, this treatment may weaken the plantar fascia and result in further damage. In addition, extracorporeal shock wave therapy (ESWT) is a treatment where sound waves are sent through the damaged tissue in order to stimulate the damaged tissue and encourage healing. This method is relatively new in treating plantar fasciitis and your doctor will be able to tell you if it is the right method for you. Lastly, surgery is the last option for those suffering from chronic or severe plantar fasciitis.

Preventing plantar fasciitis is crucial. There are many choices to help prevent the occurrence of this condition, and keep it from returning. One of the most important is maintaining a healthy weight in order to reduce tension on the plantar fascia. In addition, shoes are very important, and should fit well and provide ample cushioning and support throughout the heel, arch, and ball of the foot so that weight is distributed evenly throughout the foot. Try to avoid walking barefoot on hard surfaces and replace old shoes before they wear out, especially shoes that you run or exercise in. When exercising, start off slow and ease into new routines to prevent sudden or excessive stress on tissue. Lastly, keep your calf muscles and the tissue of your feet stretched. Greater flexibility in the tissue makes them less susceptible to damage.

www.plantar-fasciitis.org