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Plantar Fasciitis

Plantar fasciitis is inflammation of the band of fibrous connective tissue on the bottom of the foot, which runs from the heel to the ball of the foot. This condition occurs when the plantar fascia is strained over time, causing the fibers to tear or stretch; this leads to inflammation, pain, and sometimes growth of a bone spur.

The inflammation may worsen by shoes that lack appropriate support, increase in weight and changes in activity.

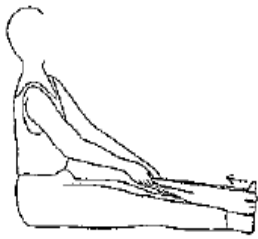
Treatment

1. Stretching the Achilles tendon and plantar fascia as described on the back of this page.
2. Shoes. Wearing appropriate shoes that provide adequate support of your foot will decrease the strain of the plantar fascia. Also, you should avoid walking barefoot.
3. Arch Supports. An appropriate arch support will also decrease the strain on the plantar fascia and help further support the structure of the foot.
4. Ice/Contrast Soaks. These can help decrease the inflammation associated with plantar fasciitis. You should use them at the end of the day or after periods of activity.
5. NSAIDS. Can be helpful for both the pain and the inflammation. Take Ibuprofen 800mg three times/day or Naproxen 500 mg twice/day. Do this for ten days, then take them as needed.
6. Cortizone Injections. Can be very helpful to break the pain cycle and put the medication at the site of the inflammation. Be sure to apply ice to your foot later in the day, as there may be some increase in pain associated with the injection.
7. Weight Loss. Any decrease in weight will decrease strain on the plantar fascia.
8. Night Splint. Can be helpful for the morning pain by allowing the plantar fascia to heal in a lengthened position overnight.

By following the above treatment plan you should experience about 50-75% improvement in 3 weeks. It may take several months to completely recover from this problem, so you must continue to treat yourself and be patient. Most people will recover from this problem, however there are a few people who will not improve. If you continue without significant improvement for 6 months, then we may consider a surgical release of the plantar fascia through a small incision and scope or other procedures which may be of benefit.

Plantar Fasciitis Rehabilitation Exercises

You may begin exercising the muscles of your foot right away by gently stretching them as follows:



Towel stretch

1. **Towel stretch:** Sit on a hard surface with your injured leg stretched out in front of you. Loop a towel around the ball of your foot and pull the towel toward your body, stretching the back of your calf muscle. Hold this position for 30 seconds. Re-peat 3 times. When the towel stretch becomes too easy, you may begin doing the standing calf stretch.



Standing calf stretch

2. **Standing calf stretch:** Facing a wall, put your hands against the wall at about eye level. Keep the injured leg back, the uninjured leg forward, and the heel of your injured leg on the floor. Turn your injured foot slightly inward (as if you were pigeon-toed) as you slowly lean into the wall until you feel a stretch in the back of your calf. Hold for 30 to 60 seconds. Repeat 3 times. When you can stand comfortably on your injured foot, you can begin stretching the planter fascia at the bottom of your foot.



Plantar fascia stretch

3. **Plantar fascia stretch:** Stand with the ball of your injured foot on the stair. Reach for the bottom step with your heel until you feel the stretch in the Arch of your foot. Hold this position for 30 to 60 seconds and then relax.

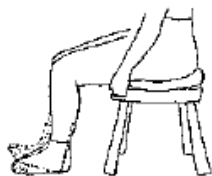
Repeat 3 times.

After you have stretched the bottom muscles of your foot, you can begin strengthening the top muscles of your foot.



Frozen can roll

4. **Frozen can roll:** Roll your bare injured foot back and forth from your heel to your mid-arch over a frozen juice can. Repeat for 3 to 5 minutes. This exercise is particularly helpful if done first thing in the morning.



Sitting toe raise

5. **Sitting toe raise:** Sit in a chair with your feet flat on the floor. Raise the toes and the ball of your injured foot off the floor while keeping your heel on the floor. Hold for seconds. Repeat 10 times. Do three Sets of 10.



Towel pickup

6. **Towel pickup:** With your heel on the ground, pick up a towel with your toes. Release. Repeat 10 to 20 times.