

Plantar Fasciitis

Podiatry

Information
for patients

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This leaflet provides information about Plantar Fasciitis and treatment for the condition.



What is Plantar Fasciitis?

It is an inflammation of the plantar fascia, a soft tissue structure that runs from the heel to the toes and supports the arch. Often there is a tenderness beneath the heel which can radiate into the arch of the foot, typically

with stiffness and discomfort when rising in the morning or after rest / inactivity.

What causes Plantar Fasciitis?

Causes include:

- Change or increase in activity.
- Biomechanical factors – flat feet, high arch feet.
- Prolonged use of flat or unsupportive footwear.
- Tight calf muscles.
- Obesity or recent weight gain – two thirds of sufferers are overweight.
- Sudden injury - trauma/tear.
- Standing for long periods on hard surfaces, causing micro-trauma.
- It can be associated with inflammatory conditions.

Treatments:

Rest

Rest is the first treatment for plantar fasciitis. Try to reduce your activity levels. Try to avoid bare-foot walking or standing on very hard surfaces such as floorboards, tiles or concrete. If this is unavoidable then wear trainers or well cushioned shoes.

Warm-up

Before getting out of bed and after sitting, draw circles with the foot and then pull the toes towards your shin. You can also massage the heel to get the blood flowing before you stand up.



Cold Therapy

To decrease inflammation you can also apply cold therapy to the sore area for 20 minutes up to three or four times a day. A good way of doing this is with a bag of frozen peas in a tea towel. Another approach is to keep a tin (e.g. a baked bean

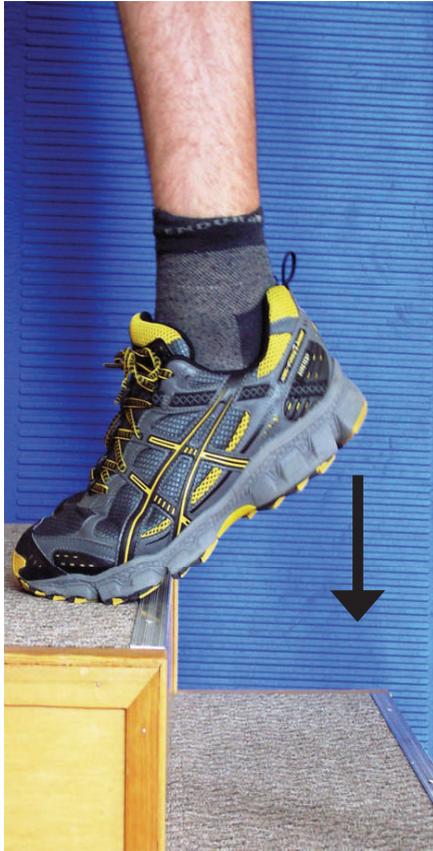
tin) in your fridge to keep it cold. Place your foot on the can and roll it forwards and backwards. This will help push any fluid away, cool the foot and help massage the area.

Cushioning The Heel

Something as simple as walking on hard floors or barefoot can cause damage to the heel. A cushioned heel lift will reduce the impact to the area and can also reduce the tightness of the plantar fascia.

Stretching

Stretching is very important in the treatment of plantar fasciitis and can be done easily at home. A daily program of exercises to stretch your calf muscles are the mainstay of treating the condition and reducing the likelihood of reoccurrence.

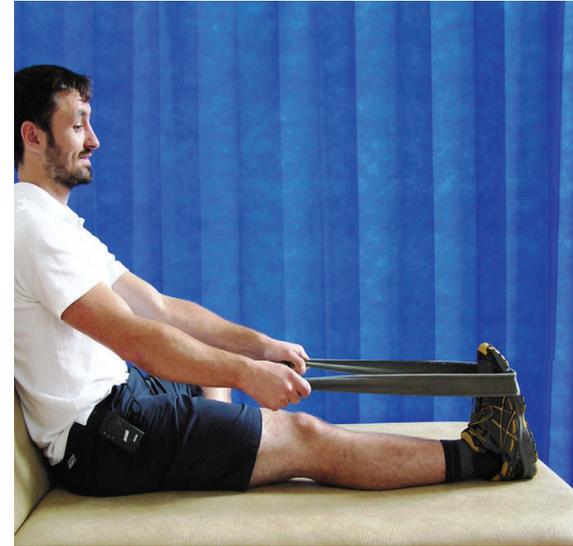


Daily routine:

These exercises will stretch your calf muscles and reduce the likelihood of reoccurrence of plantar fasciitis:

- Standing with your feet on the bottom step go up onto your tiptoes.
- Lower your heels down in a slow controlled manner to below the level of the step until you feel muscle resistance and hold for a count of 15.
- Return to your tiptoes slowly and then repeat.
- The exercise can be performed in two ways, with and without the knee bent to target different calf muscles.

- Once you are confident you can progress to one leg at a time.
- Start with three sets of 10 repetitions twice a day.



You can supplement step stretching with the use of a belt / towel and pull the foot towards your shin. This is less effective but can still be useful. Hold each stretch for a count of 15 and complete three sets of 10 repetitions twice a day.

Shoes

Your footwear needs to be supportive and cushioned. This means a substantial sole that is not too flexible or bendy. Trainers are recommended and in particular the mountain or approach style of shoe.



Orthotics

A common cause of plantar fasciitis is when excessive and repetitive forces are applied to the structure. Orthotics are often used to support the foot and relieve or reduce these damaging forces.

Alternative treatments:

- **Taping**
Taping has shown to be an effective treatment for plantar fasciitis and can help indicate if orthotic therapy is suitable.
- **Cortisone injection**
A cortisone injection can sometimes decrease the localised inflammation and therefore reduce the pain. It is generally used once other options have been fully explored.
- **Therapeutic Ultrasound**
Therapeutic ultrasound is intended to breakdown adhesions that contribute to inflammation and pain.
- **Acupuncture**
Acupuncture has had some positive results for people who have exhausted the standard treatment's. The needles can release endorphins, the brains natural painkillers and anti-inflammatory agents.
- **Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy**
Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy uses energy pulses to induce the bodies natural tissue repair process.
- **Surgery**
Surgery is used in rare cases where all other treatment options have been exhausted, symptoms remain extremely painful and there is a clear clinical case for surgical intervention.

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