

Plantar Fasciitis

If your first few steps out of bed in the morning cause severe pain in the heel of your foot, you may have plantar fasciitis (fashee-EYE-tiss), an overuse injury that affects the sole 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.

You're more likely to develop the condition if you're female, overweight or have a job that requires a lot of walking or standing on hard surfaces. You're also at risk if you walk or run for exercise, especially if you have tight calf muscles that limit how far you can flex your ankles. People with very flat feet or very high arches also are more prone to plantar fasciitis.

The condition typically starts gradually with mild pain at the heel bone often referred to as a stone bruise. You're more likely to feel it after (not during) exercise. The pain classically occurs right after getting up in the morning and after a period of sitting.

If you don't treat plantar fasciitis, it may become a chronic condition. You may not be able to keep up your level of activity, and you may develop symptoms of foot, knee, hip and back problems because plantar fasciitis can change the way you walk.

Treatment

Stretching is the best treatment for plantar fasciitis. It may help to try to keep weight off your foot until the initial inflammation goes away. You can also apply ice to the sore area for 20 minutes three or four times a day to relieve your symptoms. Often a doctor will prescribe a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen or naproxen. Home exercises to stretch your Achilles tendon and plantar fascia are the mainstay of treatment and reduce the chance of recurrence.

Anti-inflammatory Medication

Anti-inflammatory medications can help decrease the inflammation in the arch and heel of your foot. These medications include Advil®, Motrin®, Ibuprofen, and Aleve®.

Use the medication as directed on the package. If you tolerate it well, take it daily for two weeks then discontinue for one week. If symptoms worsen or return, resume for two weeks, then stop.

You should eat when taking these medications, as they can be hard on your stomach.

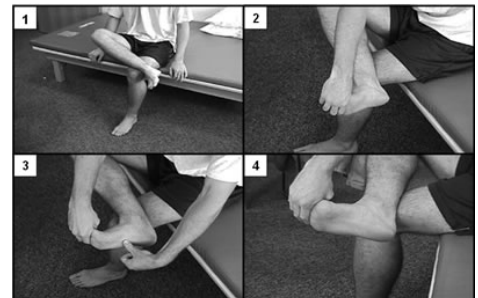
Plantar Fascia-Specific Stretching Program

Cross your affected leg over your other leg.

Using the hand on your affected side, take hold of your affected foot and pull your toes back towards shin. This creates tension/stretch in the arch of the foot/plantar fascia.

Check for the appropriate stretch position by gently rubbing the thumb of your unaffected side left to right over the arch of the affected foot. The plantar fascia should feel firm, like a guitar string. Hold the stretch for a count of 10. A set is 10 repetitions.

Additionally, apply firm pressure to the area that is tender and massage the affected area for 60 seconds each time you stretch.



Achilles Tendon Stretch

Place your affected leg behind your unaffected leg with the toes of your back foot pointed towards the heel of your other foot.

Turn the heel of your affected leg slightly outward.

Lean into the wall.

Bend your front knee while keeping your back leg straight with your heel firmly on the ground.

Hold the stretch for a count of 10. A set is 10 repetitions.

Perform the stretch at least three times a day.

