

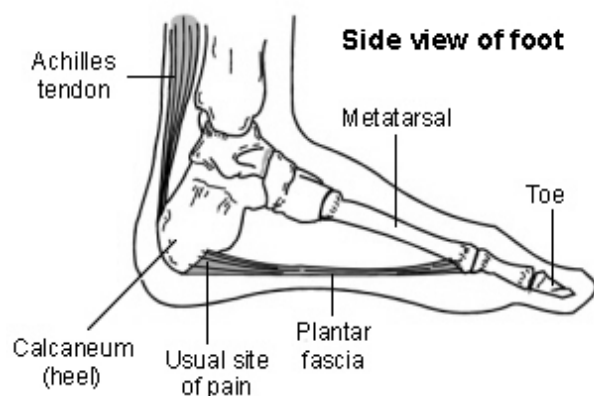
FOOT PAIN

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CAUSES

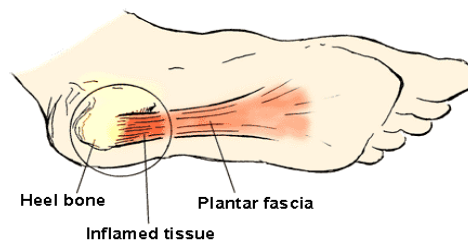
Plantar fasciitis is a condition which involves pain in the heel. It occurs when the plantar fascia, a thin layer of tough tissue supporting the arch of the foot becomes sore where it attaches to the heel. Under certain conditions, the plantar fascia can undergo excess strain, which causes microscopic tears and inflammation. This inflammation causes the heel to hurt, feel hot or sometimes even swell.

Typically with plantar fasciitis, the pain is worse when first getting out of bed, or when getting up after sitting for a while. Usually, after walking for a few steps, the pain will ease. In some people the pain gets worse with prolonged standing or walking.



There are a number of possible causes of plantar fasciitis and they often work in combination. Walking for prolonged periods of time in shoes that don't give good support and/or don't fit well (especially if they are too small), tightness of the foot and calf, improper athletic training, and anything that causes excess stress on the arch are potential causes. People with low arches, flat feet or high arches are at increased risk of developing plantar fasciitis.

In some cases excess stress on the plantar fascia over a long period of time can cause extra bone growth at the heel, which is known as a "heel spur". Heel spurs may be present with plantar fasciitis, but not always. Likewise, the plantar fascia can be very sore, even though there are no heel spurs present. No treatment can make the bony growth of heel spurs go away, but the inflammation that causes the pain can be very effectively treated, and the symptoms will stop.



TREATMENT

The general rule with plantar fasciitis is the sooner you seek treatment, the sooner you will be better. Without treatment, symptoms can sometimes go on for 6 to 18 months or more.

Your physiotherapist will start you on a treatment program which may include:

- Stretching exercises, for the calf
- Strengthening exercises for your foot muscles and legs
- Treatment on the painful heel, including deep tissue massage, and possibly machines such as ultrasound
- Taping of the arch may be used to give support
- Advice on icing the heel several times per day, especially after exercise, to reduce inflammation
- Advice on proper sizing and shoe make for your particular foot type, for instance if you have flatter arches, a shoe with very good arch support may be recommended
- Advice on altering athletic training and/or general activities as necessary
- You may be advised to purchase orthotics which are custom made inserts for your shoes that support your arch.