

Heel pain/ Planter fasciitis

What is heel pain?

Heel pain is caused by repeated strain on your plantar fascia, a strong tissue (ligament) connecting your heel bone to the base of your toes. The pain is often worse after rest, for example first thing in the morning.

You are more likely to develop this condition if you:

- Stand or walk a lot on hard surfaces
- Have flat feet or high arches
- Have tight calf muscles
- Gain weight or are overweight which puts extra strain on the heel

Treating heel pain

- If possible stand and walk for shorter periods of time
- Ice for 10 minutes four times a day. Prevent ice burn by placing a wet towel between your skin and the ice. Stop if you discover burning, blisters or itching. **DO NOT APPLY** ice if you have poor circulation or are unable to feel hot or cold on your feet. ie you suffer from neuropathy/loss of sensation.

Treatment

Shoes

High heeled or flat shoes (ballet type, flip flops) are not advised. A small heel on shoes is preferable. Varying your heel height often may also help. Footwear with an arch support may give some relief.

Heel cushions

Place a heel cushion in your shoe to help reduce your pain. Heel cushions can be purchased from most chemists.

Weight

If you are overweight, losing weight can help reduce your pain.

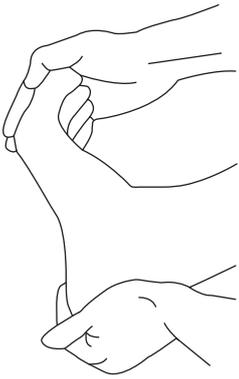
Orthotics

Orthotics are inserts which are fitted into shoes to help reduce your pain. Inserts can be purchased from most chemists. Do not use orthotics if you have high arches or if the orthotics increase your pain.

Medication

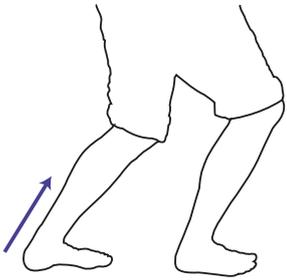
Your doctor may prescribe anti-inflammatories or your chemist can advise you on anti-inflammatory gels and sprays.

Stretches



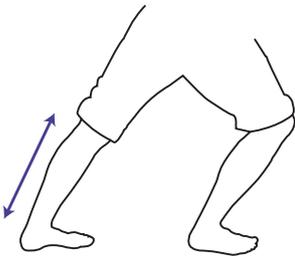
Stretch one

- Cross your affected leg over the other.
- Place your hand around the base of your toes and bend your ankle towards you.
- Pull all your toes back towards your shin until you feel a stretch in the arch of your foot.
- Hold the stretch for 10 seconds and repeat 10 times.
- Do this 3 times a day.



Stretch two

- Place both hands on a wall, with your affected leg behind the other leg, toes facing forward.
- With the rear knee bent, lean towards the wall allowing the calf to stretch.
- Keep your heel on the ground.
- Do not allow the arch of your foot to flatten as you stretch.
- Do this 3 times a day.



Stretch three

- Repeat the above stretch with your back knee straight.

Recovery

Body tissues usually recover within 6-8 weeks. Full recovery can take longer. You are encouraged to use the recommended treatments for 6 weeks. If your symptoms persist, your GP may refer you to a podiatrist, orthotist or physiotherapist who will assess your foot to establish which forms of treatment will help your problem.

Further information

If you require this leaflet in an alternative format such as large print, spoken (on CD) or Braille, or require it in a different language - speak to a member of staff.