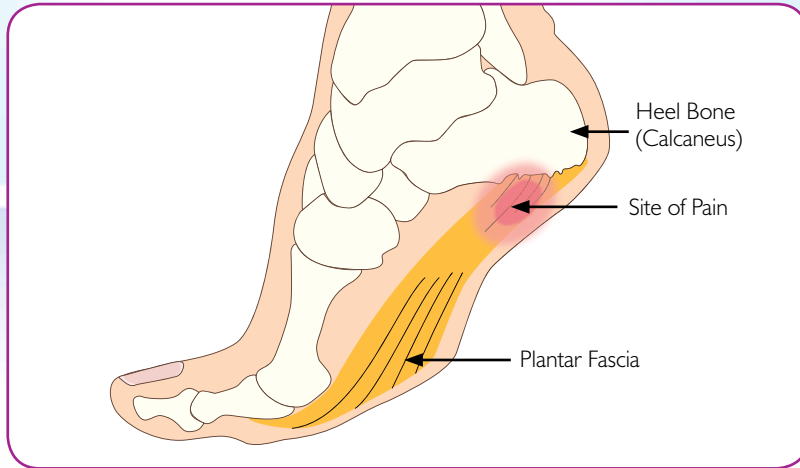


PLANTAR FASCIITIS



WHAT IS IT?

The sole of your foot is covered with a thick band of connective tissue called the plantar fascia. It is attached to the heel and blends into the foot tissue near the toes. When this structure becomes overstretched and therefore damaged like anywhere else in the body, it will become swollen and inflamed whilst it tries to heal itself.

(The suffix - itis is used to indicate inflammation). The term plantar fasciitis is often used interchangeably with simply 'heel pain'. It is caused by a combination of many things including a sudden increase or change in exercise, your foot posture, your body mass, tight calf muscles and footwear.

DIAGNOSIS

Usually plantar fasciitis can be diagnosed by a foot examination alone as pain and tenderness can be identified on the inside part of the heel bone or along the inside arch of the foot. Careful questioning also helps the diagnosis as it commonly gives you pain during the first steps after long periods of rest, usually first thing in the morning. During the day with gentle exercise the pain can

ease but may worsen after long walks or heavy exercise. Plantar fasciitis usually creeps up on you slowly until it becomes painful one day which is when patients seek help. It is unusual for patients to need scans for diagnosis. Your podiatrist will only want a scan if they suspect a more severe injury such as a stress fracture in your bone.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

A range of treatments are available for plantar fasciitis. Your podiatrist will carry out a foot posture assessment to see if your foot type is contributing to your pain. If this is the case then orthotic insoles might be prescribed for you to wear in the short term or long term depending on their findings. They will also test your muscle tightness and assess

your footwear and walking/running style. Some patients will have a foot strapping applied which can remain in place for up to a week which will help to rest the area. As they put together your treatment plan, it is likely that you will be given some self-help tasks to do such as calf stretches, applying ice to the area, using ibuprofen gel or tablets to help with

Continued overleaf

TREATMENT OPTIONS CONTINUED

the inflammation and some self massage using a PediRoller to help your plantar fascia to heal. One of the most important self-help treatments is simply to rest the area. The damaged tissues cannot heal if they are continually being stressed. With proper care and treatment most people are free from pain within a year and often a couple of months is all

it takes if you help yourself and treat the injury as instructed.

In more severe cases, a steroid injection or surgery may be required. This is very rare and is only used after the conservative treatments have failed to work.

GENERAL FOOTCARE ADVICE

REGULAR WASHING

Feet should be washed daily in warm water and then dried gently with a soft towel. A sprinkling of soothing foot powder is helpful, especially between the toes.

VALUE OF MASSAGE

Massage will help tone up circulation and relax the muscles. Try contrast bathing by alternatively dipping the feet first in comfortably hot water for one minute and then cold water for twenty seconds for a total of ten minutes. Always finish with the cold dip.

CUT TOE NAILS REGULARLY

Keep toe nails trimmed to just over the tip of the toe and cut them straight across. Never cut around the corners as this may lead to ingrowing toe nails. Cut them at least once per month.



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