

# **Plantar Fasciitis (Heel Spur Syndrome)**

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Plantar Fasciitis is a common problem among people who are active in sports, especially runners. Symptoms start with a dull intermittent pain in the heel and progress to a sharp persistent pain. The plantar fascia is a thick fibrous material on the bottom of your foot. It attaches to the heel bone, fans forward towards the toes and acts like a bowstring to maintain the arch of the foot. Problems occur when part of this fascia is repeatedly placed under tension as in running. Too much tension causes an overload that usually produces inflammation at the point where the fascia is attached to the heel bone. Results are severe pain. Since it is difficult to rest the foot, the problem gradually becomes worse because the condition is aggravated with each step. In severe cases the heel is visibly swollen. Problems may progress rapidly and treatment must be started as soon as possible.

Ice the sore area for 15-20 minutes several times per day to reduce inflammation. Use pain as your guide. If your foot is too painful, rest it. Wearing a heel pad of either felt, sponge, or newer synthetic material can help to equalize and absorb the shock as you walk to ease pressure on the plantar fascia. Physical therapy will help decrease your inflammation. Later, the small muscles of the foot need to be strengthened to support the weakened plantar fascia. Shoes are important for proper fit, choose shoes that are comfortable and give you the proper support and make sure you are wearing the right shoe for your sport activity. After symptoms have subsided, you should gradually return to full activity.