

# Plantar Fasciitis

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Plantar Fasciitis is an inflammation caused by excessive stretching of the plantar fascia. The plantar fascia is a broad band of fibrous tissue which runs along the bottom surface of the foot, attaching at the bottom of the heel bone and extending to the forefoot. When the plantar fascia is excessively stretched, this can cause plantar fasciitis, which can also lead to heel pain, arch pain, and heel spurs.

The excessive stretching of the plantar fascia that leads to the inflammation and discomfort can be caused by the following:

- Over-pronation (flat feet) which results in the arch collapsing upon weight bearing
- A foot with an unusually high arch
- A sudden increase in physical activity
- Excessive weight on the foot, usually attributed to obesity or pregnancy
- Improperly fitting footwear

With Plantar Fasciitis, the bottom of your foot usually hurts near the inside of the foot where the heel and arch meet. The pain often occurs either first thing in the morning or after a prolonged period of rest because the plantar fascia contracts back to its original shape during a period of rest. As the day progresses and the plantar fascia continues to be stretched, the pain often subsides.

The key for the proper treatment of plantar fasciitis is determining what is causing the excessive stretching of the plantar fascia. When the cause is over-pronation (flat feet), an orthotic and longitudinal arch support is an effective device to reduce the over-pronation and allow the condition to heal. If you have unusually high arches, cushion the heel, absorb shock and wear proper footwear that will accommodate and comfort the foot. Other common treatments include stretching exercises, plantar fasciitis night splints, wearing shoes that have a cushioned heel to absorb shock, and elevating the heel with the use of a heel cradle or heel cup.

Remember every time your foot strikes the ground, the plantar fascia is stretched along the bottom of your foot. You can reduce the strain and stress on the plantar fascia by wearing proper fitting foot wear or orthotics, gradually increasing your physical activity, and losing any excess weight. If problem persists, consult your doctor, podiatrist, or physical therapist with further questions.