

What is the Plantar fascia?

The plantar fascia is a thick band of tissue that connects your heel bone to your toes. It helps support the overall shape of your foot, especially when standing

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Plantar fasciitis (Plan-tar fashee-eye-tiss) refers to the irritation and scarring of the plantar fascia and is one of the most common causes of heel pain. Often there is no one event that triggers heel pain. It generally develops over time and can become extremely painful, especially with the first few steps in the morning.

Causes

Predisposing factors to heel pain/plantar fasciitis:

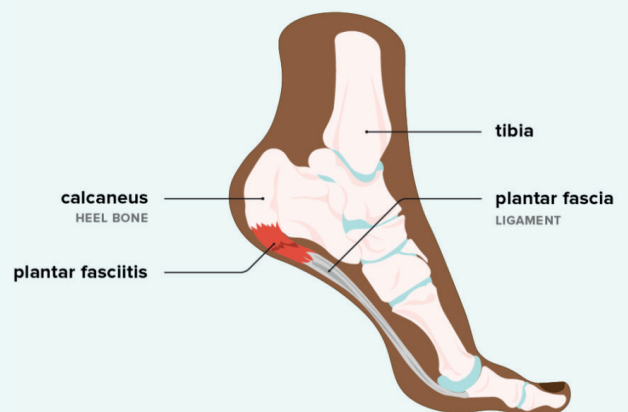
1. Inappropriate shoes
2. Toe running, hill running
3. Soft terrain running (eg. Sand)
4. Ageing

The condition is more likely to develop if you're female, overweight or have a job that requires a lot of walking or standing on hard surfaces. Risk factors include your natural foot shape (flat or high arch), your activities (walking, running) and improper shoe wear.

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In many cases the source of the painful heel will never be clearly defined. The following are thought to be probable in the cause of heel pain syndrome.

1. Change or increase in activity
2. The need for arch support in shoes
3. Lack of flexibility in the calf muscles
4. Weight (overweight)
5. A sudden injury
6. Using shoes with little cushion
7. Spending an increased amount of time on your feet
8. With age the fat pad on the foot becomes thinner

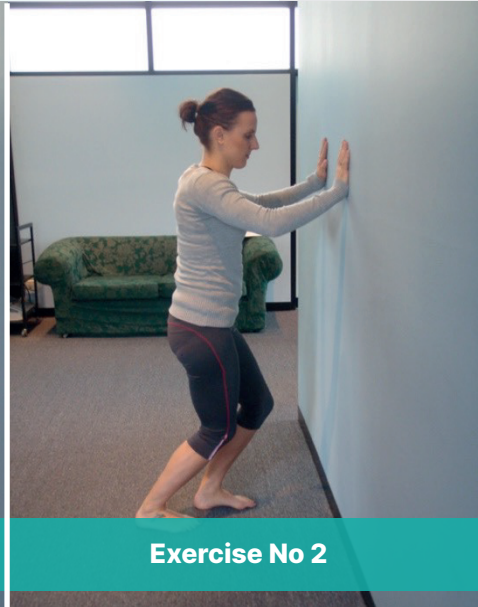


Conservative Management

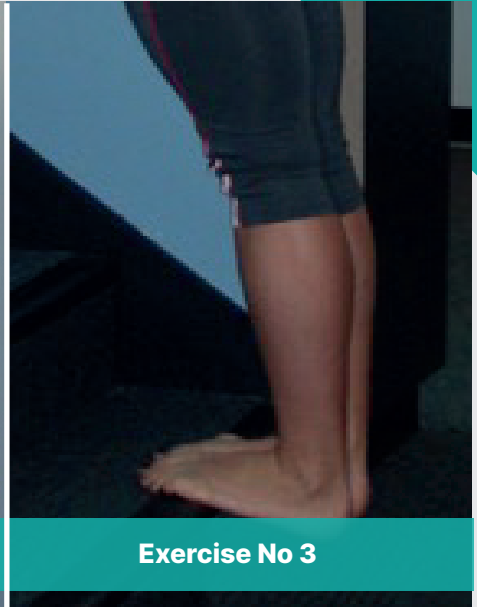
Conservative treatment is recommended for the first 12 months following onset of symptoms.



Exercise No 1



Exercise No 2



Exercise No 3

Stretching

The single most important aspect of treatment is stretching. Stretches should be performed **6 times per day** and aids in lengthening the plantar fascia and Achilles tendon.

Anti-inflammatory techniques

With reference to Anti-Inflammatory techniques, icing is the preferred method. Ice should be applied to the sore area for **20 minutes** three or four times a day to relieve your symptoms. We recommend icing after you have completed your stretches. Non-steroidal Anti-inflammatory Medicines (NSAID's) can be used intermittently to help decrease inflammation and pain.

Heel Cups

Shoe supports are effective in treating plantar fasciitis. These should be used on a daily basis in your dress shoes. The supports cushion the pain in your heel and reduce the stress on your Achilles tendon. Additionally, seakers and walking shoes should be worn whenever possible.



Exercise 1

You lean forward against a wall with one knee straight and heel on the ground. Your other knee is bent. You will feel a stretch through your heel cord and arch of the foot that remains straight. Hold the stretch for 15-30 seconds, relax and straighten up. **Repeat 10 - 20 times** each leg as necessary.



Exercise 2

Once again lean forward onto a wall. Flex both knees, squat down slowly. Try to keep both of your heels on the ground if you can as you squat down. You will feel a stretch through your heel cord and arch. Hold for 15-30 seconds and repeat **10-20 times** on each leg as necessary.



Exercise 3

Stand on a step and balance yourself on the ball of your feet. Slowly lower your heels as low as they will go and until you begin to feel your calf muscle stretch. Hold this position for 15-30 seconds, **repeat 10-20 times** as necessary.

Cortisone injection

Cortisone is the most potent agent to suppress inflammation that is available. It is injected in conjunction with local anaesthetic directly into the painful area to decrease inflammation and relieve pain.

Surgical Management

If symptoms continue with conservative management, then surgical treatment is considered.

Endoscopic Plantar fascia release is a surgical procedure that removes or releases the diseased portion of the tissue, responsible for the pain. The ligament then heals in an elongated position. Surgery is performed endoscopically, minimising the size of the incision, and reducing the risk of complications. Endoscopic surgery also enables the patient to get back on their feet with minimal pain following surgery.

Frequently Asked Questions

How successful is plantar fascia release surgery?

The majority of patients who undergo surgery will have decreased pain and improved function. On average most patients will be able to return to normal weight bearing two to three weeks after surgery. Continued stretching, appropriate footwear and avoiding activities that cause pain are important to a successful recovery.

What happens after the procedure?

Post-surgery, you may be able to bear weight immediately as tolerated in the boot. This will stabilize the ankle joint, allowing the plantar fascia to heal. The boot is required to be worn for a period of **4 weeks** post operatively.

You can expect some pain and swelling following surgery. The leg may need to be kept elevated and you may need to take oral pain medication.

You will likely be examined at 2 week, 4 weeks, and six weeks post operatively.

It is important to follow correct post-operative protocol to prevent complications and achieve optimal results. Always keep in mind R.I.C.E. Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation.

Potential Complications

There are complications that relate to surgery in general. These include risks associated with anaesthesia, infection, damage to nerves and blood vessels, and bleeding or blood clots.

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