



Heel Pain: Plantar Fasciitis

Plantar fasciitis is a painful condition of the heel. It is caused by over-use of the plantar fascia or arch tendon of the foot. The plantar fascia is a broad, thick band of tissue that runs from under the heel bone to the front of the foot.

Plantar fasciitis is most common in sports which involve running, dancing or jumping. At particular risk are runners and walkers who over-pronate (excessive rolling in or flattening of the foot).

What Causes Plantar Fasciitis?

The most common cause of plantar fasciitis is very tight calf muscles which leads to overpronation of the foot. This in turn produces repetitive over-stretching of the plantar fascia leading to irritation and thickening of the tissue. As the fas-



cia thickens it loses flexibility and strength. The cause of pain is thought to be degeneration of the fascia at its attachment to the calcaneus (heel bone).

Excessive walking in footwear



which does not provide adequate arch support has been attributed to plantar fasciitis. In addition, overweight individuals are more at risk of developing the condition due to the excess weight impacting on the foot.

What are the Signs and Symptoms?

- Heel pain, under the heel and usually on the inside, at the origin of the attachment of the fascia.
- Pain when pressing on the inside of the heel and sometimes along the arch.
- Pain is usually worse first thing in the morning as the fascia tightens up overnight often creating the sensation of walking on a pebble. After a few minutes it eases as the foot gets warmed up.
- As the condition becomes more severe the pain can get worse throughout the day if activity continues.

How is Plantar Fasciitis Treated?

Avoid aggravating activities. The plantar fascia must be rested until it is not painful. By walking on the painful foot you are continually aggravating the injury. Stop any unnecessary activities which place additional stress on the fascia.

Stretching of the calf and plantar fascia is an important part of treatment and prevention. Also ice can be applied regularly to help reduce pain symptoms.

If heel pain that you are managing yourself does not improve after a few days, it is best to contact one of our Jubilee Sports Physiotherapy clinics to get an accurate diagnosis of the injury and the most appropriate treatment plan.

A biomechanical assessment may determine if you overpronate. Prescription of a fitted orthotic or taping of the plantar fascia can restore normal foot biomechanics if overpronation is a problem and reduce pain symptoms.

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