

FOOT PAIN

About 90 percent of people will recover from plantar fasciitis within a few months following conservative treatment.

Plantar fasciitis is one of the most common explanations of heel pain. It is caused by inflammation to the thick band that connects the toes to the heel bone, called the plantar fascia, which runs across the bottom of your foot. The condition is most commonly seen in runners, pregnant women, overweight people, and individuals who wear inadequately supporting shoes. Plantar fasciitis typically affects people between the ages of 40 and 70.

Symptoms

Plantar fasciitis commonly causes a stabbing pain in the heel of the foot, which is worse during the first few steps of the day after awakening. As you continue to walk on the affected foot, the pain gradually lessens. Usually, only one foot is affected, but it can occur in both feet simultaneously.

Diagnosis

To diagnose plantar fasciitis, your doctor will physically examine your foot by testing your reflexes, balance, coordination, muscle strength, and muscle tone. Your doctor may also advise a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or X-ray to rule out other sources of your pain, such as a pinched nerve, stress fracture, or bone spur.

Treatment

Treatment for plantar fasciitis includes chiropractic care, medication, physical therapy, shock wave therapy, or surgery.

Medications

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen and naproxen are used to treat the inflammation and pain of plantar fasciitis, but they won't cure the condition. Corticosteroids can also be used to ease pain and reduce inflammation. Corticosteroids are applied either as a topical solution in conjunction with a non-painful electric current or through injections to the affected area.

Physical Therapy

Stretching exercises for the Achilles tendon and plantar fascia are recommended to relieve pain and aid in the healing process. Sometimes application of athletic tape is recommended. In moderate or severe cases of plantar fasciitis, your doctor may recommend you wearing a night splint, which will stretch the arch of your foot and calf while you sleep. This helps to lengthen the Achilles tendon and plantar fascia for symptom relief. Depending on the severity of your plantar

fasciitis, your physician may prescribe a store-bought orthotic (arch support) or custom-fitted orthotic to help distribute your foot pressure more evenly.

Surgery and Other Procedures

When more conservative methods have failed to reduce plantar fasciitis pain, your doctor may suggest extracorporeal shock wave therapy, which is used to treat chronic plantar fasciitis. Extracorporeal shock wave therapy uses sound waves to stimulate healing, but may cause bruises, numbness, tingling, swelling, and pain. When all else fails, surgery may be recommended to detach the plantar fascia from the heel bone. Few people need surgery to treat the condition.

Home Remedies

Stretching your plantar fasciitis is something you can do at home to relieve pain and speed healing. Ice massage performed three to four times per day in 15 to 20 minute intervals is also something you can do to reduce inflammation and pain. Placing arch supports in your shoes absorbs shock and takes pressure off the plantar fascia.