

# PLANTAR FASCIITIS

## WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Plantar fasciitis/heel pain syndrome is an inflammation of a thick band of tissue at the bottom of the foot called the plantar fascia. The inflammation of the plantar fascia, at its origin at the heel bone (calcaneus), causes the classic symptoms of pain at the bottom and/or side of the heel, and is often the most painful upon arising in the morning or when first standing. This is called post-static pain - pain after rest. This is because the plantar fascia is tight after rest, and the stretching inflames the painful area even more, therefore increasing the discomfort.

## HOW DOES IT FEEL?

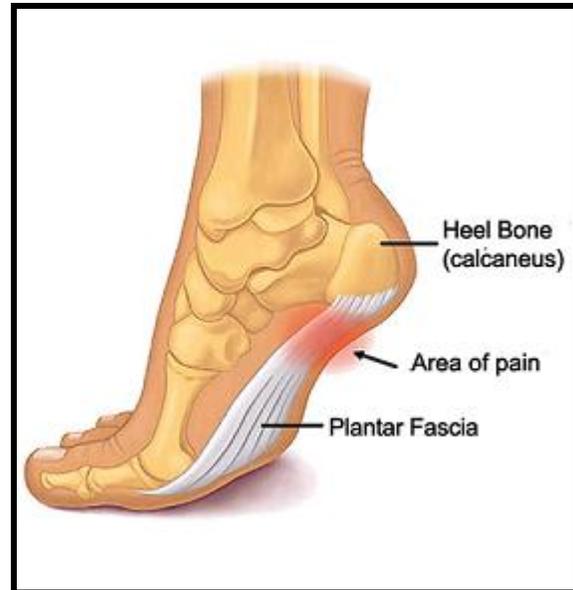
The classic symptoms are pain and a feeling of stiffness in the bottom and/or side of the heel. This pain is often sharp and is often described as a feeling of stepping on a stone or nail. The pain often reduces after a few steps, though it may still persist. This pain can also occur when walking after sitting for a prolonged time, such as sitting at work, driving a car, etc.

## HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

Plantar fasciitis/heel pain syndrome can occur via a myriad of causes. Risk factors such as weight gain, foot type (flat feet, high arched feet), a high level of activity, sports, overuse, improper footwear, improper support of the feet, trauma, tightness of muscles and daily activities can trigger the classic symptoms. Often, there is no single cause, but a culmination of several risk factors. It is imperative to address all of these factors to treat this condition successfully.

## WHAT CAN I DO FOR IT?

Switching footwear to a well supportive running shoe can be effective. Reducing your level of activity helps. When you are off your feet, the injury is healing, it's getting better. When you are standing with inadequate foot support, the foot can become injured. An orthotic or arch support can support your foot well enough to virtually eliminate the pain that is occurring while standing and walking.



## WHAT WILL MY PODIATRIST DO FOR IT?

Treatment options can include oral anti-inflammatory medications, heel cushions, heel cups, physical therapy, stretching exercises, taping/strapping of the foot, over-the-counter inserts, custom orthoses, injections, weight loss, change of shoes, night splints and surgery. Each option has advantages and disadvantages, and must be tailored to the needs and unique characteristics of each patient. Conservative care is successful 85% of the time, and surgical treatment is usually performed 5-10% of the time.

## CAN I PREVENT IT FROM HAPPENING AGAIN?

Controlling body weight, wearing supportive shoes and having additional support in your shoes can decrease the chance of recurrence. Additionally, stretching the Achilles Tendon and hamstrings, and maintaining flexibility are extremely important in preventing recurrence of the problem. Most importantly, pain and discomfort are your body's signals that a problem exists. Prompt attention and treatment can often result in significant relief with the avoidance of complications.