

## HEEL PAIN



Plantar fasciitis is a common cause of heel pain in adults. It is often an overuse injury that is usually due to a repetitive strain (such as standing or walking for long periods which you are not normally accustomed to).

### ANATOMY



The plantar fascia is a thick connective tissue running from the heel to the toes.

It is important for shock absorption and forms the support for the arch of the foot.

### PHYSIOTHERAPY CAN HELP BY:



- Addressing your concerns about the condition
- Identifying risk factors that are contributing to your current condition
- Providing individualized activity modification
- Pacing of exercises and activities
- Prescribing suitable strengthening & stretching exercises

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Pain at heel or arch of the foot.
- Heel pain especially when standing and taking the first few steps in the morning after waking up, or after prolonged sitting.
- Heel pain may initially improve with some walking but may worsen after long periods of weight bearing activities such as walking, standing or running.

### AGGRAVATING FACTORS

- Running on hard surfaces
- Walking barefoot
- Sudden increase in exercise intensity/volume
- Being overweight
- Prolonged standing/walking

### PROGNOSIS

- A large majority of patients are treated successfully with conservative care.
- The duration of the heel pain may last longer than 6 months.

*Disclaimer: The material contained in this information sheet is intended as a guide only and does not constitute advice or treatment. For further information, please see your qualified healthcare professional.*

## MANAGEMENT/TREATMENT

The majority of plantar fasciitis is treated **conservatively**.

### Pain management

- **Icing:** Using a cold can or ice pack on the area of pain may help reduce pain
- **Pain medications:** Helps provide short-term pain relief

### Decreasing load on the plantar fascia

- **Activity modification:** Temporary activity modification in reducing repetitive loading of the plantar fascia is important. It is advisable to change your exercise regime to reduce mileage and to switch to lower impact activities.
- **Weight management:** If you are overweight, losing weight may help to reduce the load on the plantar fascia.
- **Use of orthotics:** Foot orthotics may be helpful to unload tensile forces on the plantar fascia.

### Strengthening and stretching exercises

- **Strengthening** the intrinsic muscles of the feet helps provide better support for the arch of the feet and reduce load on the plantar fascia.
- **Stretching** of the plantar fascia and Achilles tendon may also help to relief plantar fascia-related pain



*Toe curls: 10 repetitions, 3 sets, 3 times daily. You should feel a gentle squeeze in the muscles in the foot.*



*Plantar fascia stretch: 30 seconds, 5 repetitions, 3 times daily. You should feel a gentle stretch in the base of the foot.*



*Calf stretch: 30 seconds, 5 repetitions, 3 times daily. You should feel a gentle stretch on the back of the leg.*

## TIPS TO HELP YOURSELF



### Activity Modification

Modify activities to a lower volume and take break.



### Icing

Using a cold can or ice pack may help reduce pain.



### Orthotics

Shoe inserts or orthotics may be helpful



### Weight Management

If you are overweight, losing weight may help to reduce the load on the plantar fascia.



### Stay active

Explore other ways to remain active.  
E.g. Rowing and cycling  
Gradually return to your usual activity.

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