

Introduction

Plantar fasciitis is a common condition causing heel and arch pain due to inflammation of the plantar fascia, a thick band of tissue on the bottom of the foot. It often results from overuse or repetitive stress, leading to micro-tears in the tissue. Symptoms include sharp pain, especially with the first steps after rest, and stiffness in the morning or after sitting.

Causes & Risk Factors

Overuse: Repetitive activities like running, prolonged standing, or walking on hard surfaces can strain the plantar fascia.

Poor Foot Mechanics: Conditions like flat feet or high arches can put extra stress on the plantar fascia.

Inappropriate Footwear: Shoes with inadequate support or cushioning can contribute to the problem.

Uneven/unstable flooring: Damaged, broken or unsupportive floor materials may cause repeated and excessive corrections of balance and posture.

Obesity: Increased weight can put extra strain on the feet.
Age: Plantar fasciitis is more common in middle age (40-60 years old)

What can I do?

If you are suffering mild or occasional symptoms, you may first wish to try and manage it yourself. There are a few things that might help, including:

Exercises that may help ([NHS Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust](#)): (see next page)

Gastrocnemius Stretch: With the affected leg behind you. Stand with both feet facing forwards and heel on the ground. Keep back leg straight and lean into the wall until a stretch is felt in the calf of your back leg. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat 6 times.

Soleus Stretch: With the affected leg behind you. Stand with both feet facing forwards and heels on the ground. Bend both knees until you feel a stretch in the lower calf of the back leg. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat 6 times

Plantar Fascia Stretch: Standing with ball of affected foot on edge of step. Stretch heel down towards floor until a stretch is felt in the calf and arch of the foot. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat 6 times.

Intrinsic Muscle Stretch: Sitting with affected leg crossed over other leg. Pull your ankle and toes up towards you until a stretch is felt in the arch of your foot. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat 6 times. While in this position, you can gently massage along the instep of your foot.

Tennis Ball / Iced Water Bottle Massage: While sitting in a chair, roll a small hard ball e.g. a golf ball / tennis ball under your foot for a few minutes. Alternatively, fill a 500l drinks bottle with water and freeze it. Place a towel on top of the bottle to prevent an ice burn and gentle roll your bare foot backwards and forwards over the bottle for a few minutes. Use enough force so that you feel a deep massage

Single Toe Curl Exercise: With foot resting on a towel, slowly bunch the towel up under your toes. Try to keep your toes flat and make your foot appear shorter. Repeat 10 times.

In addition:

- Try putting an ice pack (or bag of frozen peas) in a towel on the painful area for up to 20 minutes every 2 to 3 hours.

- Wear shoes with cushioned heels and good arch support or use insoles or heel pads in your shoes.
- Over-the-counter medication such as paracetamol or ibuprofen may provide short term relief from painful symptoms but should not be relied on for long term treatment.
- Try to lose weight if you're overweight.

What if these suggestions don't help?

For moderate or severe symptoms, or for mild symptoms that do not respond to self-care, then you should seek review with your family doctor (GP) or Occupational Health Practitioner. You may wish to consider review by a physiotherapist.

Special Considerations

If you believe that your symptoms may have been caused by work, you should raise the issue with your manager or Occupational Health Practitioner.

Short term adjustments or a temporary redeployment may provide the rest needed for inflammation to subside and an ergonomic review of the process or task might help to identify and reduce the risk of problems in the future.

Further information may be found here:

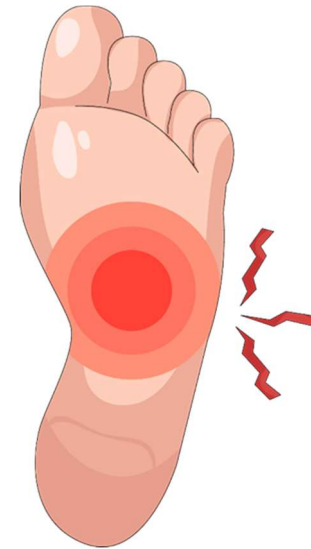
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/plantar-fasciitis/>



A copy of this & other documentation can be found from <https://mohs.co.uk/resources> or using the QR code here.

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Plantar Fasciitis & Work: A Guide for Employees



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