

Self Help for Plantar Fasciopathy

Information for patients

What is a Plantar Fasciopathy?

Plantar Fasciopathy is pain within the strong band of tissue (like a ligament) that stretches from your heel to your toes called your plantar fascia. It supports the arch of your foot and also acts as a shock-absorber in your foot.

Risk Factors

- Being overweight
- Spending a lot of time on your feet
- A recent change or increase in exercise
- Wearing shoes with poor support or cushioning
- Tightness in calves and Achilles tendon



Symptoms

The main symptom is pain that can be found anywhere on the underside of the heel. However, the most common spot is the centre of the bottom of the heel. The pain is often at its worst during the first few steps in the morning or after a period of inactivity.



Prognosis/Outlook

Fascia tissue heals slowly and often takes several months and a combination of treatments to improve.

Management

- Weight loss is very important if overweight
- Keep walking barefoot to a minimum. A helpful tip is to wear trainers as slippers around the house
- Avoid high impact activities, such as running or aerobics
- Try to avoid long periods of standing
- Complete the appropriate exercises regularly (see page 2)
- Wear supportive footwear
- Some patients will benefit from orthotics to support the arch of the foot or gel heel pads which may be bought from a chemist
- Massage the most painful part of the heel by firmly rolling it over a tennis ball or golf ball in a seated position

Exercises

Diagram	Explanation
	<p>Cross the affected leg over your knee and bend your big toe up with your fingers.</p> <p>Hold for 20 seconds.</p> <p>Repeat five times, three times per day.</p>
	<p>Stand in a walking position with the leg to be stretched straight behind you and the other leg bent in front of you. Take support from a wall or chair.</p> <p>Lean your body forwards and down until you feel the stretching in the calf of the straight leg.</p> <p>Hold for 20 seconds.</p> <p>Repeat five times, three times per day.</p>

Frequently Asked Questions

Is rest a good idea?

In the initial stages of the condition it may be advisable to rest from sporting activities until the acute pain has subsided but complete rest is not necessary.

Am I safe to drive?

As long as you can perform an emergency stop you are safe to continue driving.

When can I return to sport?

You may return to sport as soon as you feel comfortable and able.

What should I do if my pain does not settle?

If your symptoms persist for longer than three months after following the advice in this leaflet, please complete a physiotherapy self-referral form from your local GP reception.

This information is available in audio, Braille, large print and other languages.
To request a copy, please ask a member of staff.

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