

## PLANTAR FASCIITIS IS THE LARGEST CAUSE OF HEEL PAIN THAT WE TREAT

Plantar fasciitis describes an injury to a tissue called the plantar fascia at the bottom of your heel and foot. When the fascia is overloaded with pressure, is strained or is directly damaged, it becomes inflamed and tender.

Your plantar fascia is a thick connective tissue band that originates from your heel and then spans your foot like a fan to connect to all five toes. You have connective tissues all around your body that work to connect, stabilise and enclose musculature and structures throughout the human body. Then plantar fascia helps to facilitate the function of the foot and maintain its shape, strength and flexibility.



## WHAT CAUSES PLANTAR FASCIITIS?

Plantar fasciitis is caused by overloading, overusing and straining the fascia past the point that it can handle so that micro-tears occur in the fibres of the tissue. This may be caused by:

- A sudden increase in physical activity or the intensity of activity
- Particular activities that strain the arch such as climbing stairs
- Wearing shoes that don't support the arch and fascia – especially if you're used to wearing supportive footwear regularly
- Your foot type or foot biomechanics that put a greater load or force through the fascia (like having a pronated, flatter foot that may cause the fascia to be overused at critical moments during gait)
- Damage to the insertion of the fascia at the heel, such as jumping down from a high surface
- Faulty training technique
- Increased bodyweight
- Increasing age

During resting or non-weight bearing periods, the plantar fascia shortens. When body weight is rapidly applied to the foot the fascia must stretch and quickly lengthen, causing micro-tears in the fascia. Hypermobility, (excessive internal motion) of the foot can induce future or coexisting problems involving the knee, hip, sacroiliac joint or the low back region. Often, it is a combination of multiple causes that have ultimately overloaded the fascia. These causes must be corrected to prevent plantar fasciitis from being an ongoing problem for you in the future.

## SYMPTOMS

The most common symptom of plantar fasciitis is heel pain first thing in the morning that tends to ease after a few minutes of walking. Other symptoms include:

- Pain at the bottom of the heel that may radiate into the arch
- Swelling
- Pain on standing after rest
- Pain may come and go, or be constantly present. Often pain can ease a few minutes after you start walking around
- Pain can range from mild discomfort to an intense stabbing pain

## HEEL SPURS

After many years, a heel spur may develop on the bottom of the heel (calcaneus) in addition to plantar fasciitis. Having a heel spur, however, does not mean that you have or will develop heel pain.

Heel spurs are visible on a lateral view x-ray of the foot. X-rays sometimes reveal very large heel spurs in patients that have never experienced any heel pain. It is not this bony spur, but rather the inflammation of the fascia that is attaching to the heel which causes discomfort. This is a common misconception.



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