



INFORMATION SHEET FOR PATIENTS WITH HEEL PAIN

YOUR CONDITION

When your first few steps out of bed in the morning or rising from a chair cause severe pain in the heel of your foot, you may have **PLANTAR FASCIITIS**. It is an overuse injury affecting the sole or plantar surface of the foot.

A diagnosis of Plantar fasciitis means that you have inflamed the tough fibrous band of tissue (fascia) connecting your heel bone to the base of your toes.

You are more likely to get this condition if you are overweight, or if you have a job that requires a lot of walking or standing on hard surfaces.

You are also at risk if you walk or run for exercise, especially if you have tight calf muscles that limit how far you can flex your ankles upwards. People with very flat feet or very high arches are also more prone to suffering the condition.

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT HEEL PAIN?

Reduce weight if overweight.

Simple painkillers such as Paracetamol and/or anti-inflammatory medicines may help to reduce the pain.

Heel cups to wear in your shoes to act as shock absorbers as you walk.

Splint - to wear at night. By pushing the foot up to stretch the tissues, this can help to improve the severe pain many people get first thing in the morning.

Stretching exercises.

THE EXERCISES

Before getting out of bed or chair

Do 10 stretches to each leg by pulling your toes up and holding for 20 seconds.

Calf stretch

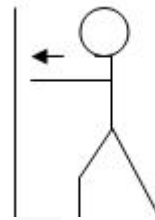
Get in a push position, but with one knee on the ground. Put your weight on the toes of your other foot and then push the heel down until you feel a slight pull. Hold that position for a count of 10. Relax and repeat 5 times on each leg.

Calf raise

This stretch is used to strengthen the lower leg and ankles. Stand with your hands on your hips, or on the back of a chair for balance. Spread your feet 6 to 12 inches apart and slowly raise your body up on your toes, lifting the heels. Return to the starting position, and repeat 10 to 15 times.

Gastrocnemius stretch

Stand a short distance away from, a solid support (eg wall) resting on your forearms. Bend the front leg and keep the back leg straight, slowly placing the heel to the floor. Move your hips forward to the wall, keeping your back flattened. Moving the back leg further away from the wall can increase the stretch.



Soleus stretch

Stand a short distance away from a solid support (eg wall) resting on your forearms. Bend the front leg, and let the back leg bend in order to stretch the lower calf muscle, and slowly place the heel to the floor. Move your hips forward to the wall, keeping your back flattened. Moving the back leg further away from the wall can increase the stretch.



The above exercises should be continued for a minimum of three months. In some cases, a referral to a Podiatrist is appropriate and in very rare cases, surgery is necessary as a "last resort".