

Do You Have Foot Pain? It Could Be Plantar Fasciitis

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Do your feet hurt every morning getting out of bed?

When you get out of bed in the morning, do you feel a sharp pain in your heel? If this is happening, you are not alone. Millions of American adults suffer from the condition known as Plantar Fasciitis, or heel pain.

Plantar Fasciitis is normally worse first getting out of bed or from a sitting position. It usually lessens as you begin walking. The pain may return after being on your feet for extended periods of time.

Plantar Fasciitis is due to the inflammation of the plantar fascia- a thin layer of tough tissue surrounding the arch of the foot from the heel bone to the ball of the foot. Repeated small tears of the fascia cause pain. The cause of Plantar Fasciitis can usually be traced to faulty structure of the foot, such as overly high or flat arches that put stress on the fascia, wearing non-supportive shoes, and hard, flat surfaces. Tightness of the foot and calf, improper athletic training, shoes that don't fit, and overuse (running too fast, too far, too soon) may hurt the fascia.

What can be done?

About 80-90% of heel pain can normally be resolved in less than six months. Treatment consists of controlling the inflammation with many different treatment options. It has been said that a heel spur, if present, does not cause the pain encountered, but rather it is the inflammation around the spur that makes this condition painful. First line strategies that can be done at home consist of stretching the foot, calf muscles, and Achilles tendon, icing the arch and heel a few times a day, and wearing supportive shoes. If these at-home treatments do not provide relief after a few weeks, it is best to see a doctor for a complete evaluation and treatment plan. It is much easier to treat this condition earlier on during the more acute phase than months down the line.

With summer just around the corner, many people who wear non-supportive flip-flop shoes or sandals throughout the summer months find themselves with this painful condition in August/September. For those who need to wear flip-flop sandals, there are some flip-flops available with an arch support built in and with room for an additional arch support if necessary.