

# Ways to deal with plantar fasciitis

By Caroline Barichievich

Plantar fasciitis is a common and often nagging problem. Two million people a year live with plantar fasciitis, an inflammation of the thick band of fibrous tissue on the bottom of the foot. The plantar fascia runs from your toes to your heel and helps form the arch of your foot. It does not get a lot of circulation, which creates a problem for many runners, hikers and people who stand and walk a lot.

Common symptoms include heel pain, pain returning after prolonged standing and pain after activities. Generally, pain is worse in the morning due to the lack of circulation and the inflammatory process that affects the tissue overnight. Some people find that pain lessens with activity because of the increased circulation to the affected tissue.



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Causes of plantar fasciitis include excessive running, walking, jumping or any repetitive stress where the tissue gets overloaded. These forces cause microtrauma to the tissue. Foot mechanics can also be a prime contributing factor if you overpronate, have flat feet or have high arches. Certain foot shapes can cause chronic irritation to the tissue with each step you take.

**Easing the pain:** Treatment for plantar fasciitis includes resting or modifying your activity, applying ice and/or taking anti-inflammatory medication, and sometimes wearing night splints. In Barton Health's Rehabilitation Services, we assess the issues causing plantar fasciitis.

In most cases, the tissue is tight, necessitating tissue or joint mobilization. Our physical therapists teach patients stretches that will allow for more pliability in the foot. Ultrasound can also increase circulation to the tissue. When someone has a biomechanical problem, we can mitigate it with orthotics, taping and recommendations for proper footwear. There are specific exercises that can help strengthen the surrounding muscles of the foot and lower leg to increase the dynamic stability of the foot, allowing a return to activity.

**Tips for happier feet:** To alleviate or prevent plantar fasciitis pain:

- Never walk with bare feet, especially with your first steps out of bed in the morning. This can overstretch any tight tissue and cause irritation.
- Roll the bottom of your foot over a frozen water bottle for five minutes to help mobilize tight tissue and decrease inflammation.

Plantar fasciitis can be a chronic ailment if not addressed in the acute stages. Therefore, consulting your health care provider right away and being proactive are vital steps to your well-being and recovery.

Get back on your feet by calling Barton Rehabilitation Services at (530) 543.5896.

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