



plantar fasciitis

Plantar fasciitis is a common overuse condition caused by sprain of the plantar fascia - resulting in inflammation. Pain and tenderness is felt over the medial tubercle of the calcaneus (on the anterior part of the heel) where the plantar fascia attaches. The pain can be severe, and made worse with standing or walking, where sharp pain may radiate into the sole of the foot. Pain may also be present when first getting out of bed in the morning.

Plantar fasciitis commonly affects active sportsmen and people with occupations involving prolonged standing. It can often be due to excessive pronation, poor foot joint biomechanics and inappropriate footwear. If the condition continues, it may lead to the development of heel spurs.

treatment of condition

Relative rest is the one of the most effective forms of recovery, accompanied by progressive soft tissue therapies provided by a myotherapist. Relative rest is where the patient stops the activity that causes the pain (weight-bearing) and uses an alternative method of exercise such as deep water (non weight-bearing).

Myotherapy treatment will involve a clinical history, biomechanical assessment, soft tissue techniques to the affected and surrounding areas, stretching therapies, and advice on exercise and footwear.

Acupuncture/dry needling for the control of pain, and ultrasound to reduce inflammation and increase healing may be of benefit. Orthotics or heel raises may also be necessary in situations where a patient's foot biomechanics are the cause of the condition (eg. excessive pronation) and conservative treatment has failed.

what you can do

Consulting a myotherapist for correct diagnosis, treatment and advice will reduce the pain symptoms, speed-up recovery time and decrease the chance of future complications.

Completing the following steps at home will aid in recovery:

1. Rest – avoid weight-bearing activities that cause pain. For people involved in running sports, substitute the activity with swimming or deep water running (non weight-bearing)
2. Ice – apply ice to affected area, especially in the acute stages of the condition. This will help reduce the swelling and pain, allowing for better recovery.
3. Stretch – concentrate on the calf (gastrocnemius/soleus complex). Push against a wall keeping the back leg and foot straight, with the heel on the ground - this will stretch the gastrocnemius. By bending the knee in this position will stretch the soleus.
4. Strengthen the arches – try to pick up marbles with your toes, or keep your foot stationary and scrunch up a towel or cloth using your toes (do 2 sets of 6 slow repetitions)
5. Advice – appropriate footwear for the appropriate activity and foot mechanics. It may also be necessary to be referred to a podiatrist for orthotics, especially when excessive pronation is a component of the condition.