

Heel Spur Syndrome



Heel spurs may form in response to the abnormal pull from the plantar fascia. The abnormal stresses that cause plantar fasciitis can also cause a heel spur (calcaneal exostosis). The dynamic causes of both conditions are very similar and can often be associated.

Over a period of time this bony growth on the underside of the heel bone may exert enough pressure and local irritation to cause the bursal sac (fluid filled sac that acts as a cushion) to swell and become inflamed. This inflammation irritates adjacent nerves and may cause a nerve entrapment.

Causes of Heel Spur Syndrome

Improper foot mechanics, contracted plantar fascia exerting a constant pull on the muscle attachment and obesity all play a role in heel spur formation. Ossification of tendons and ligaments at their attachments to bone may be a result of the normal aging process. A study reported

in Clinics in Podiatric Medicine and Surgery found that 92% of patients with heel spurs had osteophytoses (bony outgrowths) elsewhere in their bodies.

Treatment of Heel Spurs

As the cause of heel spur syndrome is similar to and may be associated with plantar fasciitis treatment plans may be similar. However heel pain may be secondary to a variety of systemic conditions not directly mechanical in nature. Therefore a proper diagnosis by an experienced podiatric physician is essential. The diversity of causes of heel pain necessitates consultation with a podiatric physician rather than self treatment. Treatment options are best discussed with your physician as the causes and variables of heel spur syndrome are varied and highly individualized.