

Plantar Fasciitis



The plantar fascia is a band of connective tissue on the bottom of the foot that runs from the heel to the ball of your foot. This ligament-like band allows the foot to be raised as it pushes off the ground. It also functions in maintaining the medial (inside) arch of your foot. It is easily strained by overuse and if your foot moves incorrectly.

Inflammation (-itis) of the plantar fascia is often caused or aggravated by improper foot mechanics. For example, if your foot flattens (pronates) too much the fascia may overstretch and swell. If your foot flattens too little the fascia is pulled too tightly with associated pain and spasm. The tiny fibers that make up the plantar fascia can become frayed with areas of micro tears and a chronic problem develop. A plantar fibromatosis (fibrous single or multiple tumor-like nodules) may develop during acute inflammation.

The pain from plantar fasciitis is usually in the arch or heel area, occurring on the inside of the foot where your heel and arch meet. The bottom of your foot may hurt when you stand especially with the first step in the morning. The pain

may become less as you move but it comes back after a period of time and upon activity. Walking and even standing may hurt. A proper diagnosis is essential to differentiate this condition from arthritis.

Conservative treatment by an experienced podiatric physician may be able to alleviate the symptoms associated with plantar fasciitis. Anti-inflammatory medications at prescription strength may be helpful in reducing pain and swelling as are injections. Shoe accommodations, night splints, a review of conditioning & training for athletes, exercises, changes in footgear, physical therapy and prescription orthotics can all be used as part of a comprehensive treatment plan. Surgery may be necessary for damaged ligaments, persistent pain, associated nerve entrapment, nodular formations and associated heel spurs.