

## Facts about Plantar Fasciitis

- Plantar Fasciitis is the most common cause of heel pain.
- It can occur at any age.
- Pain is greatest under the heel of the foot but can occur in the arch as well.
- Pain varies during the day from a sharp morning pain to a dull ache in the afternoon.
- Plantar Fasciitis is **not** caused by heel spurs.
- Plantar Fasciitis is caused by one or all of the following; flat feet, poor footwear, increase in weight or carrying weights, increased activity, walking or running on hard surfaces and tight calf muscles.

## Treatment

Improvement may take a long time, especially if the condition has existed for a long time. There are multiple causes of plantar fasciitis so there are many treatment techniques. They are as follows:

- Rest – use pain as your guide. If the activity is causing pain it is time to stop and rest. Non-weight bearing exercise is best i.e. cycling or swimming.
- Ice – application of frozen peas wrapped in a tea towel placed onto the most painful area for 15 minutes at the end of the day. If you suffer from chilblains this treatment is not for you.
- Medication – anti-inflammatory drugs can help to break the pattern of pain. Neurofen daily, following dosage directions carefully. If you cannot take anti-inflammatory drug this treatment option is not for you.
- Strapping – this is a temporary treatment that tests if your foot requires greater mechanical control.
- Shoes – if greater mechanical control is required then footwear is the first area to address. A supportive walking/sports style shoe is going to provide the best support while your foot is recovering.
- Stretching – calf and plantar fascia stretches can help a lot. The calf muscle and the plantar fascia are connected at the heel by the Achilles tendon and if one is tight it will cause tightness and pulling of the other.
- Massage – a golf ball placed on the ground in front of you while you are sitting can be used to massage the painful plantar fascia. Roll the golf ball around under your foot until you find the most painful area. Stop rolling the press the area firmly down on the golf ball. Hold this until the pain subsides then find another painful area and repeat the process.
- Cortico steroid injections – this can sometimes provide **short-term** pain relief. It is painful and you need to stay off your feet for a few days after the injection.
- Surgery – this is a **last resort** option and I do not recommend it.
- Orthosis – these are shoe inserts that provide mechanical control for your foot. There are two types of orthoses, prefabricated and custom made. If supportive footwear is not enough then orthoses may be required.