



# Reducing your risk of developing Plantar Fasciitis



**GUEST CORNER**

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The plantar fascia is a thick band of connective tissue that runs across the bottom of the foot from the heel to the base of the toes. The plantar fascia supports the foot arch, serves as shock absorber, and helps to propel you forward when walking.

Irritation of the plantar fascia can lead to a condition known as plantar fasciitis.

Acute plantar fasciitis is usually triggered by a specific injury and is shorter in duration than the typical chronic plantar fasciitis that lasts months.

Plantar fasciitis causes a stabbing pain in the heel and bottom of the foot. The pain is usually worst with the first few steps getting up in the mornings, long periods of standing, or getting up from sitting for a while.

**FACTORS THAT INCREASE THE RISK OF DEVELOPING PLANTAR FASCIITIS**

The following factors may increase your risk of developing plantar fasciitis or plantar heel pain:

- **Overuse:** Repetitive strain on the plantar fascia from activities like running, walking, or standing for long periods of time. High impact sport like basketball and running place excessive stress on the plantar fascia. Occupations that require standing for prolonged periods such as teachers and healthcare workers, are at risk.
- **Foot structure and biomechanics:** Flat feet, high arches or an abnormal walking pattern from poor posture can increase the stress on the plantar fascia.
- **Improper footwear:** Shoes lacking proper arch support or cushioning can exacerbate mechanical stress and increase the risk of injury.
- **Age:** The condition is more common in middle-aged individuals as the connective tissue loses elasticity.
- **Weight:** Excess body weight place additional stress on the plantar fascia.
- **Changes in activity level:** A sudden increase in physical activity, particularly if done without proper preparation or gradual progression.
- **Medical conditions:** Diabetes, nerve damage, arthritis can contribute to foot pain.

**PREVENTATIVE MEASURES TO REDUCE YOUR RISK OF DEVELOPING PLANTAR FASCIITIS**

- Reduce or modify the activities that put stress on the heel, such as running or prolonged standing, and alter your high impact activity with low impact, such as swimming or cycling.
- Increase blood flow to the fascia before you step out of bed. You can use your hand and fingers to rub and stretch your plantar fascia and toes or use a tennis ball to role under your foot for about one min.
- Stretching exercises for the calves to relieve the tightness and tension and massaging your calf muscles, roll out on a roller or use a rolling stick.
- Strengthening exercises for the calf and feet muscles.
- Proper wide based footwear to encourage good foot support and blood flow to your fascia. Orthopedic devices such as arch support or custom insole may alleviate pressure on the PF and support the foot.
- Physical therapy to increase blood flow and engage in a structured program to improve strength and flexibility in the foot and leg muscles.
- Reduce inflammation in your body by making healthy choices in your diet and keeping your weight under control.

**SOME STRETCH EXERCISES TO REDUCE YOUR RISK OF DEVELOPING PLANTAR FASCIITIS**

Never force into pain, listen to your body, and pain level for any stretches or strengthening exercises. The calf muscles are in the back of your lower leg and consist of the Gastrocnemius and deeper Soleus and forms the Achilles Tendon that connect the calf muscles to the heel bone. Hold each stretch 30 to 60 sec. and repeat 3x per day:

- Stand in front of a wall to hold on for support. The affected leg behind, toes and foot pointing straight forward and heel flat. Slowly bend your front knee until you feel a stretch in the back calf hold.
- Stand as in exercise #1, now bend the back leg and sitting back onto your heel, keep your heel flat, until you feel a stretch in the back of your heel.
- Stand on a step, place the affected foot with the ball of your foot on the step and drop your heel down off the step until you feel the stretch in the back of your calf.

**STRENGTHENING EXERCISES TO REDUCE YOUR RISK OF DEVELOPING PLANTAR FASCIITIS**

- Your strengthening exercises must focus on your toes, feet, calves, and whole leg as the plantar fascia is part of the lower kinetic chain when you walk.
- Regain full toe and foot mobility by flexing and pointing your whole foot and "writing" the alphabet with your foot. Start seated progress to standing, balancing on one leg and "write" the alphabet with your whole leg moving.
- Sit with your foot on a towel and scoop the towel to the inside, then to the outside using your forefoot.
- Stand with your toes curled over a rolled up small towel and slowly raise up on the ball of your feet, crunching the towel with your toes, slowly lower your heels down. Progress if you have no pain to performing the exercise standing on one leg.

Ignoring plantar fasciitis can result in chronic heel pain that hinders your regular activities and significantly impact your daily life. You're likely to change your walk to try to avoid plantar fasciitis pain, which might lead to foot, knee, hip, or back problems.

If you suspect you have plantar fasciitis or are experiencing persistent heel and foot arch pain consult your healthcare provider for an accurate diagnosis and personalized treatment plan.



Lize Lubbe is the owner of Lize Lubbe Physical Therapy with its main practice located at 892 Route 35 in Cross River and a PT Studio in the premises of Apex Fitness (where her team focus on the rehabilitation of sports-related injuries). Learn more by calling 914-875-9430, emailing [contact@lizelubbept.com](mailto:contact@lizelubbept.com) or visiting [www.lizelubbept.com](http://www.lizelubbept.com).



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