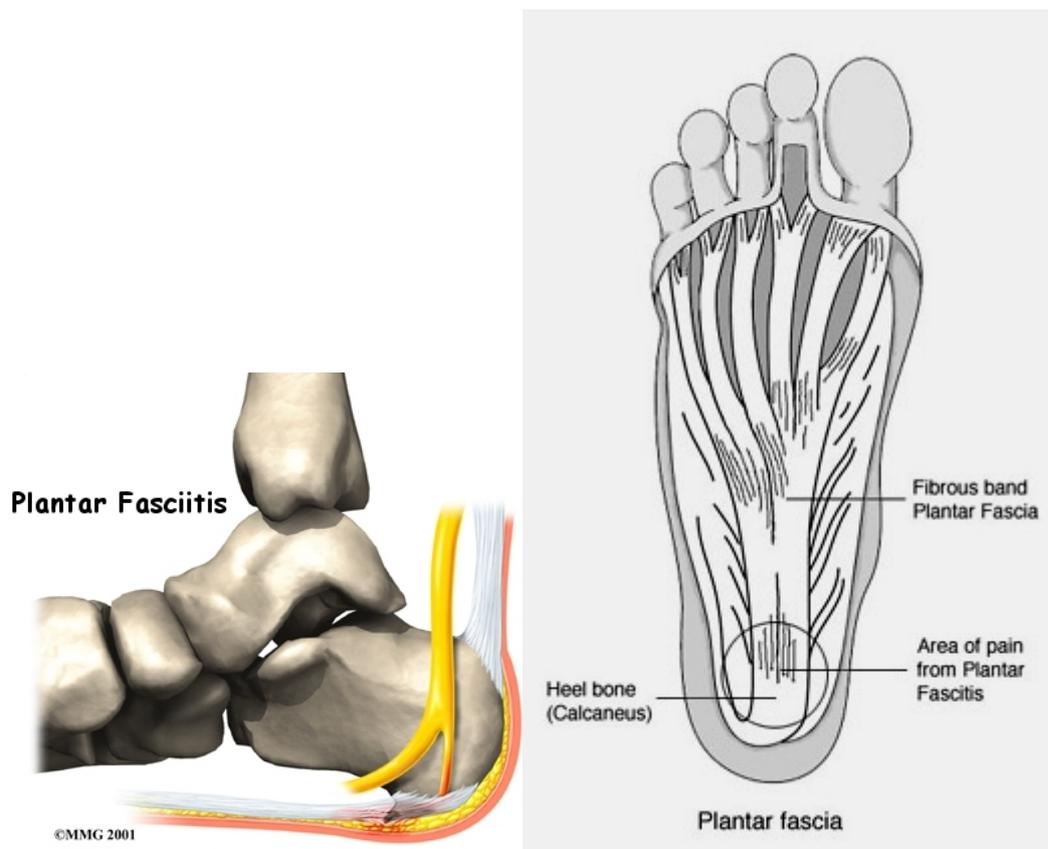




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PLANTAR FASCIITIS (HEEL PAIN OR CALCANEAL SPUR)



Plantar fasciitis is a common painful condition affecting the bottom of the foot. Plantar fasciitis can come from a number of underlying causes. Finding the precise reason for the heel pain is sometimes difficult. Most often can be treated without surgery

Where is the plantar fascia, and what does it do?

The plantar fascia is a structure that runs from the front of the heelbone (calcaneus) to the ball of the foot. This dense strip of tissue helps support the arch of the foot.

When the foot is on the ground a tremendous amount of force is concentrated on the plantar fascia. This force stretches the plantar fascia as the arch of the foot tries to flatten from the weight of your body. This is just like the string on a bow is stretched by the force of the bow trying to straighten.

How does plantar fasciitis develop?

Constant stress injures fascia and it repairs itself over and over again

A bone spur sometimes forms as the body's response to try to firmly attach the fascia to the heelbone. This appears on an X-ray of the foot as a heel spur.

The chronic inflammation of the fascia itself may be the source of pain in many cases. The small nerves that travel under the plantar fascia on their way to the forefoot become irritated and may contribute to the pain.

Individuals who spend the majority of their work day on their feet and in individuals whose body-mass index is $>30 \text{ kg/m}^2$ [overweight] are predisposed to plantar fasciitis

What does plantar fasciitis feel like?

Pain in the center of the heel when weight is placed on the foot.

This is usually most pronounced in the morning when the foot is first placed on the floor.

An X-ray may be ordered to rule out a stress fracture of the heel bone and to see if a bone spur is present that is large enough to cause problems.

Laboratory investigation: to rule out a systemic illness : rheumatoid arthritis, Reiter's syndrome, or ankylosing spondylitis.

Treatment?

Nonsurgical Treatment

Most patients get better with the help of nonsurgical treatments.

Stretches for the calf muscles on the back of the lower leg take tension off the plantar fascia.

Supporting the arch with a well fitted arch support to reduce pressure on the plantar fascia.

Special type of insert into the shoe: soft heel cushion

Shock wave therapy is a newer form of nonsurgical treatment. It uses a machine to generate shock wave pulses to the sore area. Recent studies indicate that this form of treatment can help but may not be effective.

Anti-inflammatory medications are sometimes used to decrease the inflammation in the fascia.

An injection of cortisone into the area of the fascia is effective.

Surgery

Surgery is a last resort in the treatment of heel pain

Most procedures that are commonly used today focus on several areas

- " remove the bone spur (if one is present)
- " release the plantar fascia
- " release pressure on the small nerves in the area

Usually the procedure is done through a small incision on the inside edge of the foot.

After Surgery

It will take several weeks before the tissues are well healed.

You will probably use crutches briefly, and a physical therapist may be consulted to help you

The stitches are generally removed in 10 to 14 days.

You should be released to full activity in about 8-12 weeks.

Prolonged recovery: May take 3 months for full recovery