

# Plantar Fasciitis Injury Help Sheet

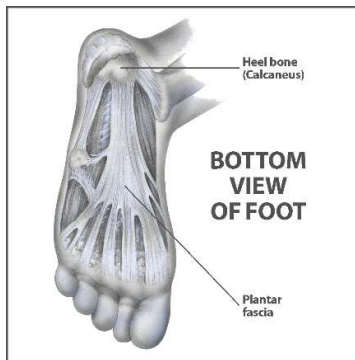


This sheet is meant as information for my clients suffering from plantar fasciitis. It is always advisable to seek a medical/ clinical diagnosis and support for treatment.

## What is Plantar Fasciitis?

Plantar fasciitis comes from the plantar fascia becoming inflamed due to being overstretched or overused.

The plantar fascia starts at the heel and goes along the sole of your foot to your toes (see image 1) and connects everything with a stretchy thick band of tissue. This is what creates the arch in the foot.



## Symptoms of plantar fasciitis:

- Pain in the heel or in the arch of the foot
- Pain on walking
- Constant dull ache in the sole of the foot
- Stiffness in the sole of the foot
- Swelling around the heel
- Pain reducing on exercise and movement but increasing when stopped
- Tightness down the calf / Achillies tendon

## Common causes of plantar fasciitis:

- High impact activities – running, jumping, dancing, etc.
- Long lengths of time standing or walking
- Arches – high or flat-footed
- Exercising without the correct warmup or stretches
- Poor supportive shoes or footwear, for example, old trainers with no shock absorption or flip flops
- Being overweight or putting 15lbs or more on in a short time period
- Pregnancy – the release of hormones can cause muscles and ligaments to relax

## What is the timeframe for recovery?

A few weeks to a few months. As with all injuries it will depend on the severity, the speed of assessment and treatment as well as the on-going maintenance and resolution of the factors that caused it.

If you are giving it a couple of weeks before seeking medical treatment, you could try some of the following to help you treat the symptoms:

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- Rest from the activity – change to a different activity that doesn't require you to be on your feet.
- Icing the foot, this should be no longer than 10-15 minutes, twice a day. A good way to do this is to have a frozen water bottle covered by a thin towel that you can roll your foot over.
- Wearing shoes that support the foot's natural shape, rather than bare feet or shoes without arch support.
- Massage and stretching both the calf and the foot (see below for some stretches).
- Over the counter non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs are often recommended but should be taken under advisement (talk to the pharmacist about this and other medication you might be taking).

## How do I stop it from coming back?

There are a few things that you could consider doing to help reduce the likelihood of it re-occurring, but it will depend on the originating cause.

- Reducing high impact activities – if running, get professional help when buying shoes and consider the running surface.
- Doing a good warm-up and stretching before and after exercise

## Stretching Exercises

- Plantar and Achilles tendon stretch – this can be done before getting out of bed. Loop a towel or similar around your foot, keep your leg straight and pull on the towel. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds, then ease off. Repeat this 3 times on each foot.
- Plantar fasciae stretch – whilst sitting down roll your foot over a cylindrical or spherical object (water bottle, ball, etc.). Do this for a few minutes or until there is discomfort. Repeat throughout the day.
- Calf stretch 1 – stand in front of a wall, put your hands against the wall. Then with your feet shoulder width apart, step back on one foot and keep the other near the wall. Bend the knee for the front foot and the other leg should be straight. Then lean towards the wall. You should feel the stretch through the calf muscle in your back leg. Hold this for 30-50 seconds and then relax in between, repeat on each leg 3-4 times at least twice a day.
- Calf stretch 2 – Stand on a step, holding onto something for support. Place your feet shoulder width apart, with your heels hung out over the edge of the step. Lower your heels and hold the position when you feel the stretch in your calf. Hold for 30 seconds and then relax, repeat 6 times per exercise and at least once a day if you're doing calf stretch 1.

This is a link to an NHS site, that shows you some of the exercises mentioned above and others for Plantar Fasciitis. You can watch and store the exercises on YouTube: [NHS Ayrshire & Arran - Plantar Fasciitis Exercises \(nhsaaa.net\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)