



What is Plantar Fasciitis?

Plantar Fasciitis is inflammation of the insertion of the plantar fascia of the foot, where it inserts onto the heel bone. It is a painful condition. Patients usually complain of:

- Pain in the heel when they stand on their feet, first thing in the morning
- Pain in the heel when they first stand up, after being seated, or resting for a while
- A dull pain in the heel after they walk on it for too long
- Tenderness under the heel to press on
- Tightness of the foot, heel and Achilles tendon region

Why Do I have Plantar Fasciitis?

Plantar fasciitis is associated with deterioration or degeneration of the plantar fascia insertion, where the fascia attaches to the heel bone. The fascia is a tough sheet of tissue (like thick stretchy canvas) that helps support the arch of the foot, and acts as a shock absorber for the arch and foot activity. It is relaxed when you are resting your foot, and tight when you stand on it.

The insertion becomes deteriorated, irritated and painful. Sometime tears or splits can be seen on imaging. It can have surrounding inflammatory changes, also seen on imaging such as ultrasound. Sometimes patients may see a spur on xray, near the site of the pain. Spurs are very common (10% of the population), and are not associated with plantar fasciitis. This is an incidental finding. Spurs do not cause plantar fasciitis.

There are some contributing factors to plantar fasciitis. These can be –tight calf or Achilles tendon, high arches, being overweight, a sudden increase in activity

How can I manage my Plantar Fasciitis Pain?

Plantar Fasciitis is an inflammatory condition. It is an acute (short term), lasting less than 12 months in about 90% of sufferers, and chronic (long term) in the other 10%. It very rarely requires surgery.

Non surgical measures for plantar fasciitis include:

1. Rest and activity modification

2. Ice packs or rolling your foot on a frozen water bottle
3. Heat packs
4. Simple analgesia – for example Panadol medication
5. Anti-inflammatory medication – if able to tolerate
Option for oral medication or topical liniment
6. Orthotics – heel raise, silicone heel cups, custom orthoses
7. Weight loss
8. Exercises – calf stretch, plantar fascia stretch
Calf stretches
Plantar Fascia stretches
9. Night splints
10. Physiotherapy
11. Guided Injections

Surgery

In very rare cases when non-surgical treatments fail, then surgery can be considered. A cut is made near the sole of the foot, near the heel. The surgery releases the tight plantar fascia, where the pain is generated. A small nerve is sometimes entrapped nearby, and the doctor will look for this entrapment

The recovery period is over six weeks, but only the first two weeks are non-weight bearing. The wound must be kept clean and dry over this period.