

## Plantar Fasciitis

The **plantar fascia** is a thick fibrous band of tissue that runs along the bottom of the foot from the heel to the base of the toes. When it becomes inflamed, or swollen, it is called plantar fasciitis.

### Signs or Symptoms

The typical presentation is deep bruise like pain at the base of the heel. The pain is sharp at times, and is worse in the morning and at the beginning of a walk or run. The pain typically fades throughout the day, or the run, as the fascia loosens.

### Cause

This condition occurs when the plantar fascia is placed under too much stress, which causes inflammation and tearing of the fascia. A tight Achilles tendon, overpronated (flat) feet or feet with rigid high arches are susceptible to plantar fasciitis. Worn out shoes that allow excessive pronation or overly stiff shoes may also lead to plantar fasciitis.

### Treatment

Wear supportive shoes. During an acute flare-up, limiting weight bearing activity and wearing inserts may help alleviate pain. If condition worsens or persists, appropriate soft tissue therapies can be helpful. In some cases, custom made orthotics may be necessary. In long standing severe or untreated cases, surgery may be required to detach fascia. Heel spurs are commonly found with plantar fasciitis but they are a reaction to the problem, not the cause.

In all cases, assessing the movement of the joints of the foot, knee and pelvis is essential to optimizing function through improved biomechanics.