

**druid hills
physical
therapy**

**Have foot
or heel pain?**

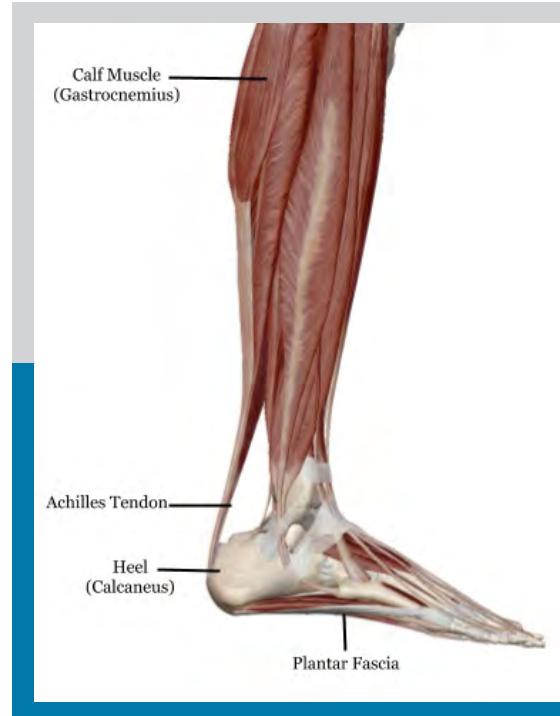
**WE
CAN
HELP!**



What is Plantar Fasciitis?

Plantar fasciitis is one of the most common orthopedic injuries, especially during summer time! It is the main cause of foot and heel pain, and it can become debilitating if left untreated.

The plantar fascia is a thick band of connective tissue that covers the bottom of your foot and connects your heel to your toes. The plantar fascia helps support your arch and assists with shock absorption when you are standing or walking. It is essentially a fascial continuation of the Achilles tendon, and your Achilles connects your calf muscles to your heel (calcaneus).



Plantar fasciitis is the inflammation or irritation of the plantar fascia, causing pain in the heel of the foot.

What Causes Plantar Fasciitis?

Typically, plantar fasciitis is caused by repetitive overuse and overstretching of your arch. This excess strain can result in tiny tears in the fascia which causes acute inflammation. If left untreated, plantar fasciitis can become a chronic condition and get worse over time. Due

to the overuse, scar tissue can develop and thicken the plantar fascia. At this stage, there are typically no inflammatory cells, and we call this condition "Plantar Heel Pain".

Common Causes:

- ✓ Tightness in calf muscles
- ✓ Having flat feet or high arches
- ✓ Being overweight
- ✓ Standing for long periods of time
- ✓ Participating in high-impact activities such as running or jumping
- ✓ Wearing non-supportive shoes
- ✓ Poor foot mechanics and weakness in arch muscles

Signs and Symptoms of Plantar Fasciitis

- ✓ Intense pain on bottom of the foot and heel
- ✓ Pain first thing in the morning
- ✓ Walking barefoot is painful
- ✓ Prolonged periods of standing or walking increase pain
- ✓ Tenderness at the base of the heel and inside of the arch



Tips for Managing Pain

Here are some basic tips if you think you may have plantar fasciitis:

1. Perform stretches for your calf and arch

- ▶ Especially before and after increased activity
- ▶ You can watch our new video where we instruct on these specific exercises!

2. Massage the bottom of your foot

- ▶ You can use a tennis ball, golf ball, or lacrosse ball
- ▶ You can also freeze a plastic water bottle and roll your arch out instead
- ▶ Amazon also sells some balls/massagers specifically for this!

3. Wear shoes with good arch support

- ▶ This means avoiding most thong flip flops, Conversees, Toms, and high heel shoes
- ▶ Typically most athletic shoes have some amount of arch support, but the stretchy mesh-like shoes usually aren't very supportive
- ▶ You can always purchase an over-the-counter orthotic for arch support like Dr. Scholls if you need more support. Just make sure to take the other insole of your shoe out first!

4. Modify your activities

- ▶ This may include taking a rest break from running, walking, or long periods of standing

5. Try ice, heat, or anti-inflammatory medications

What happens if my pain doesn't improve?

Physical Therapy for Plantar Fasciitis

If your pain lasts longer than a few weeks and doesn't seem to be improving, it may be time to try Physical Therapy!

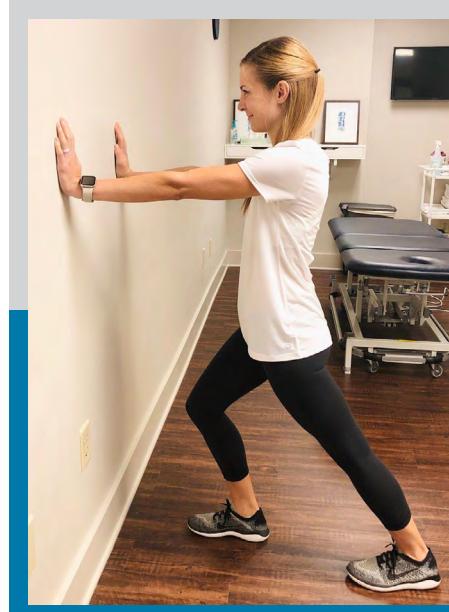
Plantar fasciitis is not always a "one size fits all" condition. There can be other factors contributing to your pain including numbness/tingling in the foot, Achilles tendon tightness/pain, and possibly knee and hip pain. Our Physical Therapists will evaluate your foot and ankle and determine the best plan and treatment approach specifically for YOU!

Don't forget, you can also refer yourself to Physical Therapy!

Stretches for Plantar Fasciitis

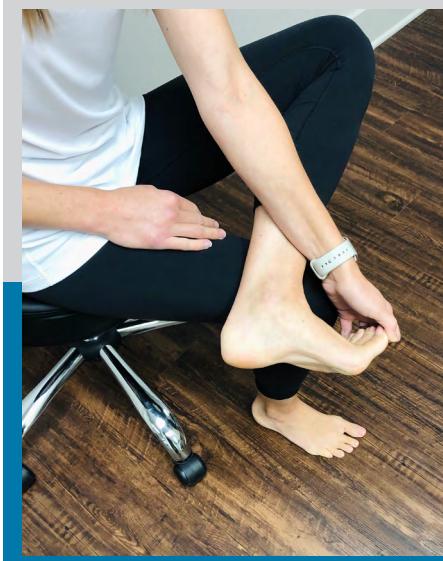
Gastroc Stretch

Begin by standing in front of a wall. Step forward with one foot in a stride stance with both feet pointed forward. Lean forward towards the wall, bending only your front knee and keeping your back knee straight and both heels glued to the ground. You should feel a stretch in your calf in your back leg. You can adjust the amount of stretch by moving closer or further away from the wall. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat on the opposite side. Perform 3 times each.



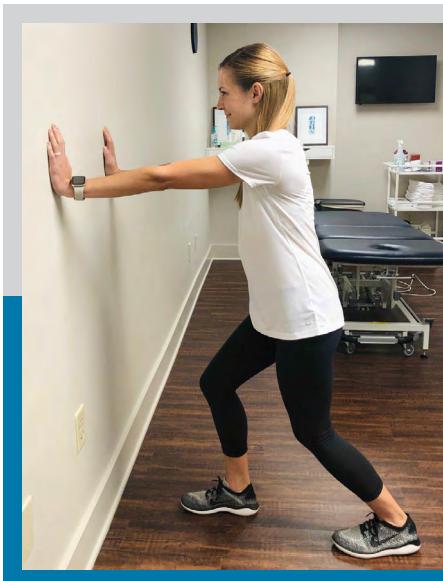
Plantar Fascia Stretch

Begin by sitting in a chair. Next, place your painful ankle on top of your other leg. Grasp your toes and bend them backwards into extension as shown. You should feel a gentle stretch in the arch of your foot and possibly your toes. Hold for 30 seconds and perform 3 times.



Soleus Stretch

Begin by standing in front of a wall. Step forward with one foot in a stride stance with both feet pointed forward. Lean forward towards the wall, bending both your front and your back knee and both heels glued to the ground. You should feel a stretch in your lower calf and possibly your Achilles tendon in your back leg. You can adjust the amount of stretch by moving closer or further away from the wall. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat on the opposite side. Perform 3 times each.



Plantar Fascia Stretch Kneeling

1 Foot

While in a kneeling position, curl the toes of your painful foot underneath you, keeping your knee elevated. The majority of your weight should still be on your opposite knee/shin. Slowly sit onto this heel until you feel a stretch/pull on the bottom of your foot. Hold for 15 seconds, then repeat 5 times.



Plantar Fascia Stretch Kneeling

Both Feet

While in a kneeling position, curl both toes underneath you. Both knees will still be down on the floor. Slowly sit onto your heels until you feel a stretch/pull on the bottom of your feet. Hold for 15 seconds, then repeat 5 times.



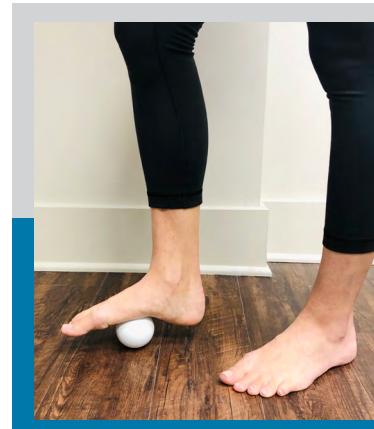
Seated Plantar Fascia Massage

While sitting, place either a tennis ball (less intense) or a lacrosse ball (more intense) under the arch of your painful foot. Press into the ball with your foot and roll the ball around, attempting to massage your plantar fascia. Make sure you are getting all the areas of your foot, from your heel up to your big toe and to your pinky toe. Massage for 1-2 minutes.



Standing Plantar Fascia Massage

While standing, place either a tennis ball (less intense) or a lacrosse ball (more intense) under the arch of your painful foot. Press into the ball with your foot and roll the ball around, attempting to massage your plantar fascia. Make sure you are getting all the areas of your foot, from your heel up to your big toe and to your pinky toe. Massage for 1-2 minutes.



Check out these exercises on Youtube:



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