



LEXINGTON PODIATRY

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PROTOCOL FOR HEEL PAIN / PLANTAR FASCIITIS

1. It is very important that you always wear shoes, even in the house and in the evening and weekends. The type of shoe that should be worn is one which has a crepe or rubber sole to provide shock absorption and one that elevates the heel as much as possible. A running shoe is an excellent choice, women may wear clogs. Wearing any type of flat shoe or shoe with a sole that is level will put tremendous pressure on the plantar fascia, hindering recovery. Shoes such as Docksidors, Keds, Ballet Flats, slippers or barefoot walking should be avoided entirely.

• **RECOMMENDED SHOES:** Reichert Seibel Born Naot Clark
Dansko Sanita Klog Finn Comfort

• **RECOMMENDED ATHLETIC SHOES:**
New Balance Saucony Asics Gel Brooks

2. If you are prescribed an anti-inflammatory, please take it regularly and completely and always with food.
3. Perform stretching exercises for the Achilles tendon/calf, which is pictured on the other side of this sheet. It is important that this be done at least 2 to 3 times a day for several minutes at a time. Please stretch with a constant tension on the Achilles tendon and do not bounce. It is important that the form be monitored closely as failure to do so will decrease the effectiveness of the exercise.
4. Massaging the fascia is very helpful utilizing a golf ball or foot massager (massager can be purchased at many health food stores and pharmacies). Massage should be firm and slightly uncomfortable. If the heel is extremely sore, icing after activities or at the end of the day is also helpful. A gel ice bag or bag of frozen peas or corn can be applied directly to the heel for ten minutes.
5. The fascia tends to tighten up overnight, so stretching before you get out of bed with a towel or belt pulling back on the foot will help ease the morning pain. An alternative to stretching in the morning is the use of a plantar fascia night splint, which may be prescribed for severe pain in the morning.

In addition to the above, you may need additional treatments; these include the use of a custom or over the counter arch supports and physical therapy. Occasionally the plantar fascia is very inflamed and a cortisone injection will be given. In addition, in severe recalcitrant cases, casting or surgery may be required.

The condition that you are suffering from is called plantar fasciitis. This is often confused with heel spurs. It is very rare that the actual spur itself causes the pain in the heel. The plantar fascia is the primary cause of most peoples' arch and heel pain. This is an inflammation of the fascial ligament on the sole of the foot. The inflammation is caused by abnormal or chronic stress on the ligament over a period of time. The causes for the pain included improper shoes, prolonged standing, traumatic injuries, poor bone structure, flat or high arched feet. It is important to follow the treatments listed above as a complete cure may take weeks or months to obtain even under the best situations. It is also important that you treat the heel until it is completely recovered, otherwise relapses are common.

Please feel free to discuss any of the above treatments if they are not understood. Proper communication and understanding is important to achieve the best possible results of your treatment.