



ALIGN PEDORTHICS

Custom Made Orthotics & Orthopedic Footwear

HEEL PAIN: WHY DO I LIMP OUT OF BED IN THE MORNING?

WHAT IS IT?

Plantar = bottom of the foot, fascia = fibrous tissue, -itis = inflammation

Plantar fasciitis is the inflammation of the thick, fibrous band that runs along the bottom of the foot. This band starts at the heel bone and ends at the ball of the foot. During a “normal” walking pattern, the plantar fascia acts to absorb shock with every step. If this doesn’t happen properly, the plantar fascia will begin to get tiny microtears near the heel, which can result in a lot of pain and inflammation. Plantar fasciitis presents as pain first thing in the morning or after sitting for a long period that gets better after a few minutes of movement. During activity the tissues are warmed up allowing them to be looser. After sleeping for 7-9 hours the plantar fascia has had a chance to tighten up (and begin to heal), so those first steps out of bed are like ripping a band aid off and starting all over again!

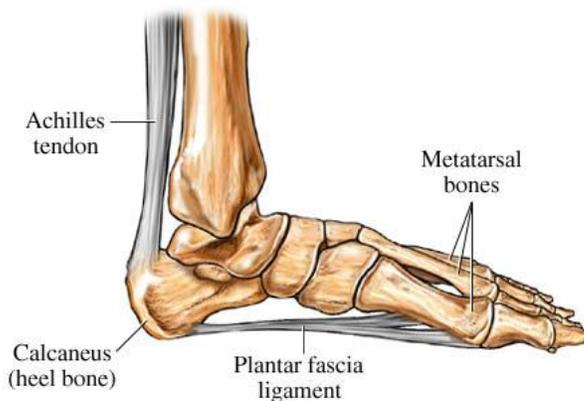


Diagram from: www.flspinalcord.us



Diagram from: www.sydneyheelpain.com

POSSIBLE CAUSES

- **Poor foot mechanics**
 - Poor mechanics at the foot, knee and/or hip (e.g., pronated feet, knees pointing inwards) can cause an abnormal walking pattern which will affect how the forces are distributed through the foot
- **Improper footwear**
 - Footwear that is worn out, lacking support, too thin or too high, or that don’t have enough shock absorption can cause pain in the foot by putting stress on the plantar fascia
- **Too much too fast**
 - Increasing activity levels too quickly in a short amount of time can cause microtears in the plantar fascia because the body doesn’t have time to adjust accordingly. Just like increasing the weight you can lift at the gym, the plantar fascia has to “train” for longer periods of use, or different activity
- **Weight**
 - The more weight that your body has to carry around from day to day the more stress that is put on the lower body, including the hips and pelvis, the knee joint and the plantar fascia

TREATMENT

Rest



- If you could be on bed-rest for 6 weeks that would be great, but it's just not realistic! If you are an avid walker or runner, **try hopping on a bicycle or swimming, or asking for modified duties at work** for the time being to reduce the amount of time on your feet in a day.

Stretching



- Usually the plantar fascia is tight as a result of the calf muscles and Achilles' tendon being tight. **Try stretching these areas (3-5 times a day, 30 seconds per side)** in order to relax these tissues. Ask your C. Ped (C) for exercises if you are unsure.

Strengthening



- There are hundreds of tiny little muscles within your feet that work to stabilize the foot and ankle. If they aren't working properly, the plantar fascia has to work overtime. Ask your C. Ped (C) for exercises to strengthen these intrinsic muscles so the plantar fascia doesn't have to work so hard!

Warming up properly



- If you have been sitting in the car for a half an hour, or you have a desk job, or you've just woken up in the morning, you may need to warm up these tissues before moving again. Warming up gets the blood flowing to the plantar fascia which can naturally loosen it up, reducing the amount of shock to your body. **Try this before standing: ankle circles, pointing your toes towards you and away from you, or drawing the alphabet with your big toe.**

Inflammation management



- Icing and massage is a great way to reduce inflammation. (Remember: -itis = inflammation!) **Try freezing a water bottle and rolling your foot on it** – don't worry, you can wear your socks!

Custom made orthotics



- The majority of cases of plantar fasciitis develop because of poor mechanics, whether it is overpronation, oversupination, too rigid of a foot, too mobile of a foot. A custom made orthotic acts to correct these poor biomechanics which are ultimately causing stress and microtears of the plantar fascia. Your C. Ped (C) will perform a full pedorthic assessment to determine if orthotics are appropriate for you.

Appropriate footwear



- There is no one size fits all in terms of footwear brands or styles. **When shoe shopping, look for something that has: a firm heel counter and torsional stability** (it doesn't move when you try to twist it). Ask your C. Ped (C) if you would like specific models that will be good for your foot type.

If you feel you have tried everything to manage your pain at home but you still aren't getting relief, custom made orthotics may be the last piece of the puzzle to becoming pain free. Laura (Allen) Van den Borre, Canadian Certified Pedorthist or C. Ped (C), can perform range of motion testing, weight bearing analysis and gait analysis to assess if custom made orthotics may be beneficial for you. Laura is located at:

Proactive Physio Plus

1796 16th St. E.
Owen Sound, ON
519-371-7125

Georgian Bay Physiotherapy

730 N Sykes St.
Meaford, ON
519-538-4500

Maple Shores Health Centre

593 Mill St.
Port Elgin, ON
519-832-4500