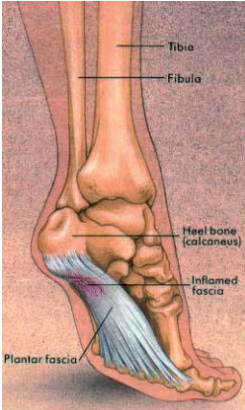




Common Running Injuries:

Plantar Fasciitis



What is Plantar Fasciitis?

The Plantar fascia is a fibrous band that runs from the base of the heel bone, it then attaches to the toes. The Plantar fascia has an important role helping to maintain the arch of the foot when pushing off of your toe during walking and running.



Symptoms

- Pain underneath the heel, It can be felt deep inside the foot this is where the Plantar fascia inserts into the heel bone.
- It predominantly produces pain in weight bearing i.e. when standing walking and running.
- Your foot can ache after running.
- It commonly feels stiffness and painful when you first stand on it in the morning.
- It is tender to touch
- Occasionally there is swelling of the heel.

Plantar fasciitis is not the only thing that could cause pain in and around the heel e.g. heel pad syndrome, so if in doubt always seek specialist advice.

What causes it?

- Altered foot biomechanics including excessive foot pronation, where the Plantar fascia is repeatedly overstretched.
- Inappropriate footwear – shoes that do not provide sufficient support for the foot either the wrong shoe or a worn shoe.
- Lack of flexibility
- The calf, both Gastrocnemius and Soleus.
- The Hamstring muscles.
- Tightness and or weakness of the muscles around the hip joint.
- Excessive mileage over time or
- Too quick an increase in mileage.
- Lack of shock absorbency in your shoe.
- You are too heavy to run i.e. carrying excess weight

How do I test myself for Plantar Faciitis?

If you adopt a position where your ankle and your big toe are both fully dorsi-flexed (bent backwards), you can feel the Plantar fascia in the arch of your foot as a taught band.

It extends from the base of your big toe to your heel (you can only feel it in the middle of

the arch of the foot, it disappears as it approaches the heel and toe).

Whilst maintaining this position, you can squeeze the Plantar fascia which bows (stretching it). If this stretch produces a sharp pain in the heel, you have a problem!

Treatment

- Rest and ice application.
- Review your footwear.
- Stretching your Plantar fascia and calf muscles.
- Electrotherapy modalities can be useful in some cases.
- Orthotics for those who have altered biomechanics
- Heel cushion to soften impact.

It is Important that you react to this condition and do not leave it. If it becomes chronic it is notoriously difficult to treat. Occasionally the Plantafascia can start to calcify (change into bone) where it attaches into the heel causing a Heel Spur which may require operative removal. The vital thing is to start treatment early as this condition is difficult to treat if prolonged. Call your Physiotherapist or Podiatrist for assessment.

Acknowledgement: We are grateful to Ramsay Healthcare at the Fitzwilliam Hospital, Peterborough for writing this advisory leaflet.



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