

# Plantar Fasciopathy

## What is Plantar Fasciopathy?

The plantar fascia is a tough and flexible band of tissue that runs under the sole of the foot. It connects the heel bone with the bones of the foot, and acts as a shock absorber. Research suggests that the condition is due to an inflammatory and wear process in the soft tissues of the heel or tissues near the heel where the plantar fascia attaches.

## Who gets it?

The condition is most common in people between 40-60 years of age. It tends to affect people who are obese or overweight or on their feet for prolonged periods. It can also happen in people whose activity levels have recently changed.

## What are the symptoms?

Pain in the heel and/or arch of the foot. This is often worse with putting your foot on the ground in the morning. It can also be worse after long periods of time on your feet.

## How is it diagnosed?

Plantar fasciopathy is diagnosed by your GP, Podiatrist or Physiotherapist by taking a history from you about your symptoms and carrying out the necessary examination.

## What can I do to help?

Although research tells us that there is no cure, be reassured that most people recover fully and usually within 6 months. There are some recommendations to help with this condition:

- Wearing supportive shoes or orthotics
- Arch supports or heel cups
- Exercises to load the tendon and stretch other muscles

# Plantar Fasciopathy (continued)

## What can I do to help (cont.)?

- Night splint may be helpful (googling “night splint for plantar fasciitis” gives you many suppliers of suitable splints)
- Simple painkillers and/or anti-inflammatory drugs can help. Your doctor or pharmacist is the best person to guide you on this and the use of painkillers
- Manual therapy can help people who lack flexibility in certain movements of the foot (i.e. dorsiflexion) if done alongside stretches and exercises

## How can therapy help?

Therapists can provide exercises and advice to improve pain.

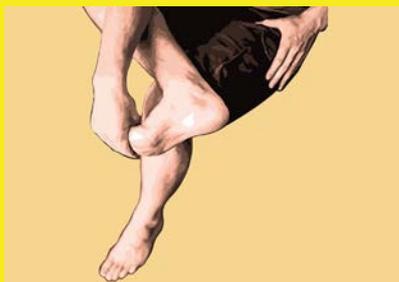
The below exercises may also help:



**Exercise 1** - With both knees apart and your toes facing forward, lean into the wall until you feel the stretch in your lower calf. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat three times.



**Exercise 2** - Stand with your toes on a step and your heels off the edge. Slowly lower your heels down, hold for 15 seconds, and then lift your heels to their starting position. You can either do both feet at the same time, or one foot at a time. Repeat five times.



**Exercise 3** - Using two fingers apply small circular friction to any tight knots or lumps in the plantar fascia. The pressure should be deep, but not so much that you tighten up with pain.

## What other treatments might help?

If the above self-management is unsuccessful, care can include:

- Cortico-steroid injection - these injections give short term relief and are not in themselves a cure
- Surgery is rarely helpful