

Plantar Fasciitis

What is plantar fasciitis?

Plantar [PLAN-tar] fasciitis [fash-ee-EYE-tiss] is a common and painful condition. It is caused by irritation and inflammation of a band of tissue—called the **plantar fascia** [fash-ee-uh]—on the bottom of your foot that supports your arch. Plantar fasciitis happens when there is too much pressure on this band of tissue and it becomes torn or bruised. In addition to pain, you may have swelling in your heel.

What does plantar fasciitis feel like?

Plantar fasciitis pain is usually right underneath the heel or in the middle (arch) of the foot. It can be either sharp or dull, depending on what you are doing. The pain is often worse in the morning when you take your first few steps, or when you get up from a sitting position. Running, walking, and standing can all make the pain worse.

What causes plantar fasciitis?

Many activities can cause small tears and irritation that lead to plantar fasciitis.

You may be at higher risk for plantar fasciitis if you:

- Are older
- Are overweight
- Have diabetes
- Have feet with high arches
- Have tight muscles in your calves

Sometimes, no specific cause can be identified.

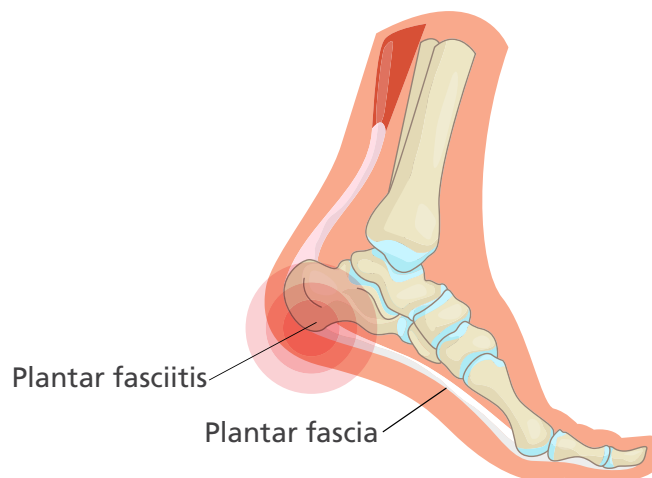


How is plantar fasciitis diagnosed?

Your doctor will examine your feet and ask questions about your pain. You might need imaging tests, such as x-rays or an MRI exam, to make sure the pain is not caused by another problem.

How is plantar fasciitis treated?

Often, you can treat plantar fasciitis with simple stretching and strengthening exercises for your feet and legs. Your doctor will explain which exercises to do and how often to do them.



In addition, these steps can help relieve pain and heal plantar fasciitis:

- You may need special inserts for your shoes to help support your arches. These inserts are called orthotics [or-THOT-icks]. Both over-the-counter and custom-made orthotics can be helpful.
- If you run or walk for exercise, you may need to cut back while your foot heals. Talk with your doctor about what type of exercise and how much is best for you.
- Your doctor may recommend an over-the-counter pain medicine, such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin).
- Holding an ice pack to the bottom of your foot for 10 to 15 minutes a few times a day can also be helpful. (Do not put ice directly on your skin.)

- If you stand for long periods of time, a padded floor mat can be helpful.
- If you are overweight, losing weight will reduce the pressure on your feet and may ease plantar fasciitis.

In some cases, other treatments might be needed. If the pain does not improve with stretching, rest, or other conservative treatments, your doctor may recommend:

- Physical therapy
- Splints to be worn on your feet overnight
- Injections of steroid medicine to reduce inflammation
- Surgery

Notes

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