

Plantar Fasciitis: Home Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions

Plantar fasciitis is pain and inflammation of the plantar fascia, the tissue at the bottom of your foot that connects the heel bone to the toes. The plantar fascia also supports the arch. If you strain the plantar fascia, it can develop small tears and cause heel pain when you stand or walk.



Plantar fasciitis can be caused by running or other sports. It also may occur in people who are overweight or who have high arches or flat feet. You may get plantar fasciitis if you walk or stand for long periods, or have a tight Achilles tendon or calf muscles.

You can improve your foot pain with rest and other care at home. It might take a few weeks to a few months for your foot to heal completely.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call Dr. Caruso if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Rest your feet often. Reduce your activity to a level that lets you avoid pain. If possible, do not run or walk on hard surfaces.
- Take pain medicines exactly as directed.
 - If Dr. Caruso gave you a prescription medicine for pain, take it as prescribed.
 - If you are not taking a prescription pain medicine, take an over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medicine for pain and swelling, such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or naproxen (Aleve). Read and follow all instructions on the label.
- Use ice massage to help with pain and swelling. You can use an ice cube or an ice cup several times a day. To make an ice cup, fill a paper cup with water and freeze it. Cut off the top of the cup until a half-inch of ice shows. Hold onto the remaining paper to use the cup. Rub the ice in small circles over the area for 5 to 7 minutes.
- Contrast baths, which alternate hot and cold water, can also help reduce swelling. But because heat alone may make pain and swelling worse, end a contrast bath with a soak in cold water.
- Wear a night splint if Dr. Caruso suggests it. A night splint holds your foot with the toes pointed up and the foot and ankle at a 90-degree angle. This position gives the bottom of your foot a constant, gentle stretch.
- Do simple exercises such as calf stretches and towel stretches 2 to 3 times each day, especially when you first get up in the morning. These can help the plantar fascia become more flexible. They also make the muscles that support your arch stronger. See these stretches in the Exercises section below.
- Wear shoes with good arch support. Athletic shoes or shoes with a well-cushioned sole are good choices.
- Try shoe inserts (orthotics) to help cushion your heel. You can buy these at many shoe stores and through Caruso Foot & Ankle.
- Put on your shoes as soon as you get out of bed. Going barefoot or wearing slippers may make your pain worse.
- Reach and stay at a good weight for your height. This puts less strain on your feet.



When should you call for help?

- Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:
 - You have heel pain with fever, redness, or warmth in your heel.
 - You cannot put weight on the sore foot.
- Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:
 - You have numbness or tingling in your heel.
 - Your heel pain lasts more than 2 weeks.

Plantar Fasciitis: Exercises

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Here are some examples of typical rehabilitation exercises for your condition. Start each exercise slowly. Ease off the exercise if you start to have pain.

Dr. Caruso or your physical therapist will tell you when you can start these exercises and which ones will work best for you.

How to do the exercises

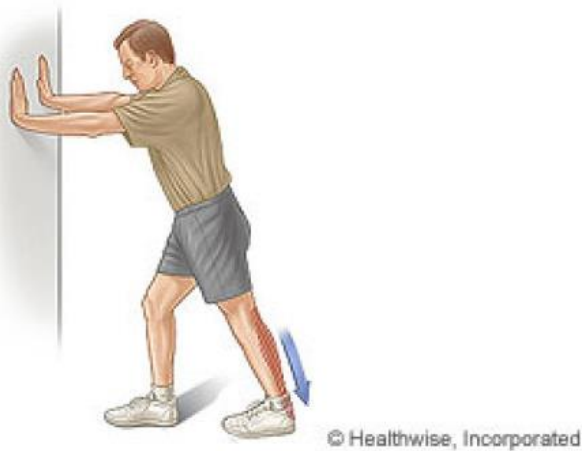
Note: Each exercise should create a pulling feeling but should not cause pain.

Towel Stretch



1. Sit with your legs extended and knees straight.
2. Place a towel around your foot just under the toes.
3. Hold each end of the towel in each hand, with your hands above your knees.
4. Pull back with the towel so that your foot stretches toward you.
5. Hold the position for at least 15 to 30 seconds.
6. Repeat 2 to 4 times a session, up to 5 sessions a day.

Calf Stretch



Note: This exercise stretches the muscles at the back of the lower leg (the calf) and the Achilles tendon. Do this exercise 3 or 4 times a day, 5 days a week.

1. Stand facing a wall with your hands on the wall at about eye level. Put the leg you want to stretch about a step behind your other leg.
2. Keeping your back heel on the floor, bend your front knee until you feel a stretch in the back leg.
3. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 2 to 4 times.

Plantar Fascia and Calf Stretch



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Note: Stretching the plantar fascia and calf muscles can increase flexibility and decrease heel pain. You can do this exercise several times each day and before and after activity.

1. Stand on a step as shown above. Be sure to hold on to the banister.
2. Slowly let your heels down over the edge of the step as you relax your calf muscles. You should feel a gentle stretch across the bottom of your foot and up the back of your leg to your knee.
3. Hold the stretch about 15 to 30 seconds, and then tighten your calf muscle a little to bring your heel back up to the level of the step. Repeat 2 to 4 times.

Towel curls



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1. While sitting, place your foot on a towel on the floor and scrunch the towel toward you with your toes.
 2. Then, also using your toes, push the towel away from you.
- Note: Make this exercise more challenging by placing a weighted object, such as a soup can, on the other end of the towel.

Marble pickups



1. Put marbles on the floor next to a cup.
2. Using your toes, try to lift the marbles up from the floor and put them in the cup.

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