

## PLANTAR FASCIITIS – NONOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT

**Information:** The plantar fascia is a fibrous band of tissue that connects your heel bone (calcaneus) to your toes and runs on the sole of the foot. Due to degeneration and microscopic tears of the plantar fascia at its origin at the heel bone, patients often feel severe pain in the heel of the foot. In most cases, plantar fasciitis can be treated without surgery. Treatment focuses on addressing the symptoms but does not address the underlying predisposing biomechanical factors. Unfortunately, there is no perfect treatment, so trying a variety of these options at the same time is the best way to approach management.

### Treatment Modalities

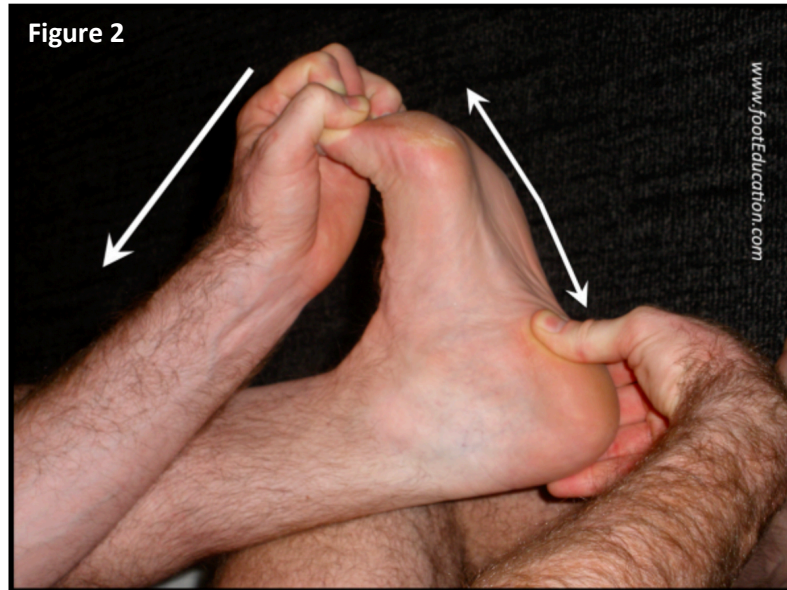
**Stretching:** Regular calf and plantar fascia stretching are the mainstays of treatment for plantar fascia. A tight calf contributes to overload and excessive tension on the plantar fascia. Daily stretching a few times per day can help to alleviate plantar fasciitis. Stretching the plantar fascia provides symptomatic relief.

1. *Calf / Achilles Stretching (Figure 1):* Place your hands against a wall for balance and step back with your affected leg. Keep the back knee / leg straight and your heel on the floor. Slowly press your hips forward and bend the forward leg. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times in one session. Try to do 3 sessions per day – morning, midday, and evening.



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2. *Plantar Fascia Stretching (Figure 2):* In a seated position, place your affected leg over the other leg. Using the hand on the affected side, hold your toes and pull back towards your shin. Gently rub the painful area at the heel to massage the area. Hold the stretch for 10 seconds. Repeat this stretch 4 – 5 times per day.



**Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Medications (NSAIDs):** Over-the-counter medications like ibuprofen or naproxen may help decrease pain. Please let us know if you cannot take NSAIDs due to a history of GI bleeding, kidney problems, or stomach ulcers.

**Over-the-Counter Orthotic:** Obtaining an over-the-counter orthotic with a cushion for the heel and a supportive arch may be helpful in decreasing pain. These orthotics can be found on Amazon by searching “plantar fasciitis insoles.” While there is no orthotic that works well for everyone, the Dr. Scholl’s Orthotics for Plantar Fasciitis may be a good place to start.

**Arch Support:** An arch sleeve and gentle compression may also help alleviate symptoms. These can be found on Amazon by searching “plantar fasciitis arch support.”

**Plantar Fascia Night Splint:** Because the arch of the foot relaxes at night during sleep, the plantar fascia contracts overnight. During the first few steps in the morning, the plantar fascia is tensioned, which may cause severe pain. If your pain mostly occurs during the first few steps in the morning, you may want to consider a night splint. The splint should be worn nightly for 3 weeks or until the pain subsides. It can also be used again if symptoms recur. The plantar fascia night splint can also be found on Amazon by searching “plantar fasciitis night splint.” While several different night splints work, the PROCARE ProWedge Plantar Fasciitis Night Splint has good reviews.

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**Soft-Tissue Massage / Ice Massage / Foot Roller:** Gently roll a tennis ball or frozen water bottle under the arch of your foot for 3 – 5 minutes.

**Comfortable Shoes:** Supportive shoes with a rocker-bottom sole can be helpful in the treatment of plantar fasciitis.

**Activity Modification:** Avoid activities that aggravate your symptoms. Transition to low-impact exercises to avoid excess load through the plantar fascia.

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