

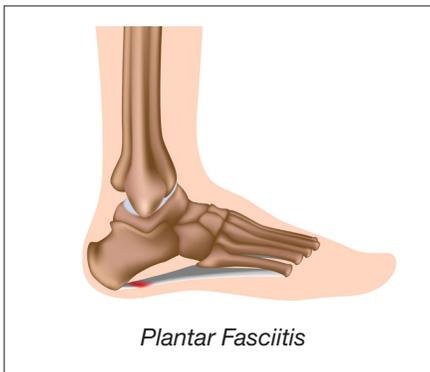
NueStep Plantar Fasciitis

Think of a taut band - a guitar string, a bowstring, even a clothesline. Each of these and every other kind of string deteriorates with use, and many need to be fixed or replaced in time.

Your plantar fascia is a thin tissue that connects the heel bone and the bones between each toe and supports the arch on the bottom of the foot. It is similar to the Achilles tendon, but runs below the ankle. Along with providing a strong connection, it acts as a shock absorber during any activity that uses the foot. Like the strings mentioned above, it can begin to fray with overuse, misuse, or environmental conditions. Unlike those strings, though, the plantar fascia can heal—or attempt to heal—itsself. The plantar fascia’s attempt to heal itself can result in a painful condition known as plantar fasciitis.

What is Plantar Fasciitis?

The suffix -itis means “inflammation,” so plantar fasciitis is what happens when the plantar fascia becomes inflamed. Some recent researchers, however, have posited that additional or different mechanics of plantar fasciitis exist and may mimic the classic feeling of plantar fasciitis. In any case, the result is the same: pain.



Symptoms

The most common symptom of plantar fasciitis is foot pain, particularly in the heel and particularly after the foot has been resting. If you report to your physician a stabbing pain during your first few steps of the day, your physician will likely suspect plantar fasciitis first.

Causes

Like other muscles and tendons, use and misuse can cause small tears to form. When the body attempts to heal these tears, inflammation can result. This explanation groups plantar fasciitis in the category informally known as “wear-and-tear disorders.” Indeed, the groups who are most likely to suffer from plantar fasciitis are:

- **Intense foot users.** Anyone who uses her plantar fascia to absorb a lot of shock is at increased risk of developing inflammation. This includes anyone who stands on his feet a lot—like construction workers or cashiers—but especially those who jump and pound on their feet, like ballet dancers and long distance runners.
- **The obese.** Obese people subject their feet to increased load-bearing, making them at risk for the condition.
- **Those with foot abnormalities.** Foot abnormalities like high arches or flat feet can improperly distribute weight, causing excess stress on the plantar fascia. Some types of abnormal walking may also do it.

Vascular and metabolic disturbances, tissue degeneration, and genetics, have also been thought to play a role, and the disorder usually strikes those between the ages of 40 and 60.

Treatment Options

The first recommended treatment option for plantar fasciitis is rest and light stretching of the calf muscle. Many experts advise flexing the foot gently several times before bed. Ice and heat have been successful in some cases, as have non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, also called NSAIDs. If these methods fail, some have tried shockwave therapy and corticosteroid injections.

Surgical treatment has shown the best results after the more conservative methods have failed, with around 80%* of surgery patients reporting lasting and complete relief of pain. A particular benefit of the surgical treatment is that it provides visualization to the surgeon, which may reveal underlying or accompanying sources of pain.

If you are suffering from plantar fasciitis, NueStep physicians can provide a minimally invasive procedure that results in lasting pain relief that in the vast majority of cases and gets you back on your feet in a very short time.

* Urovitz EP, et al. Endoscopic plantar fasciotomy in the treatment of chronic heel pain. Can J Surg 2008 Aug;51(4):281-3.