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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

What is Plantar Fasciitis?

Plantar fasciitis is a common, painful foot condition. It refers to the syndrome of inflammation of the band of tissue that runs from the heel bone, along the arch, and attaches to the ball of the foot. It is most often seen in middle-aged men and women, but can be found in all age groups. It is diagnosed with the classic symptoms of pain well localised over the heel area of the bottom of the foot. The plantar fascia is a strong and tight tissue that contributes to maintaining the arch of the foot. It is also one of the major transmitters of weight across the foot as you walk or run. Therefore, the stress placed on the tissue is tremendous.

When a patient has plantar "fasciitis", the thick ligamentous connective tissue that forms the arch of the foot becomes inflamed (tendonitis) and can make normal activities quite painful. Symptoms of plantar fasciitis are typically worse early in the morning when you stand up after sleeping. At that time, the arch tissue is tight and simple movements stretch the contracted tissue. After the plantar fascia tissue stretches back out, the pain usually subsides, but often returns with prolonged standing or walking.

Plantar fasciitis can be associated with a rapid gain of weight, an increase in your physical activity (running or walking), prolonged standing, or any activity that puts repetitive or constant pressure on the bottom of the feet.

Treatment of plantar fasciitis is with short-term rest and controlling the inflammation. Here are the steps that my patients take in order to cure their plantar fasciitis:

Rest - Avoiding the precipitating activity; for example, take a few day off jogging or prolonged standing/walking. Just resting usually helps to eliminate the most severe pain, and will allow the inflammation to begin to cool down.

Apply Ice packs - Icing will help to diminish some of the symptoms and control the heel pain. Icing is especially helpful after an acute flare-up of symptoms. Ask your chiropractor how long the ice should be applied and how often.

Exercises/stretchers - your chiropractor can give you specific exercises and stretches that will relax the tissues that surround the heel bone.

Custom orthotics - Specific shoe inserts, known as “custom orthotics” are often the key to successful treatment of plantar fasciitis. To make these, your chiropractor will have to make a cast or impression of your foot and design them specifically for each of your feet. These custom orthotics often permit patients to eventually continue their routine activities without pain.

Night splints – Splints can be worn at night to keep the heel stretched out when you sleep. By doing so, the arch of the foot does not become contracted at night, and is hopefully not as painful in the morning.

These modalities alone will cure the plantar fasciitis pain in most patients. However, be forewarned that the symptoms will not resolve quickly. Most patients find relief within about three months and over 90% within one year.

If you have plantar fasciitis and would like some relief, or if you just have more questions, please contact my office directly.