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patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk



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Addenbrooke's Hospital Outpatient Physiotherapy

Patient Information

Plantar fasciitis

Document history

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Plantar fasciitis is characterised by pain in the heel of the foot and/or the arch of the foot.

It is caused by an over-stretching or over-stressing of the “plantar fascia”, which is a broad band of tissue that spans the bottom of the foot and contributes to the formation of the arch. It is often caused by an increase or change in activity, weight gain, or due to faulty biomechanics (alignment) of the foot and ankle.

These symptoms are often worse first thing in the morning as a result of this tissue tightening up overnight. Therefore it is recommended to do the following exercises first thing in the morning, when sitting for prolonged periods of time and before and after sport.

1. Kneel with your toes tucked under.
Slowly lower your buttocks onto your heels.
Hold 30 seconds. Repeat.

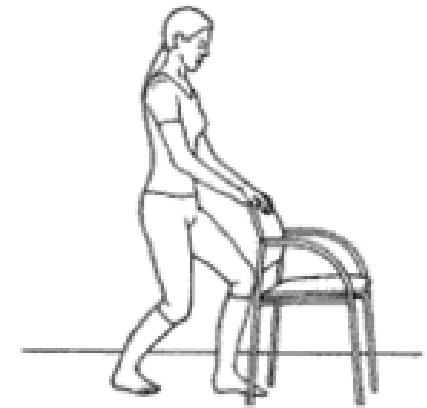


2. Stand with one foot in front of you and the other behind you. Face a wall or chair for support. Ensure that your forefoot and heel are in a straight alignment and that the arch of the foot is gently raised. Maintain this during the stretch. Lean your body forwards until a stretch is felt in the calf of the straight leg behind you. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds. Repeat.



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3. To stretch the deeper calf muscle, start as exercise 2 but lean back onto your back leg, letting the knee bend without lifting the heel off the floor. Using one hand, gently pull back the big toe. With the fingers of your other hand, massage in circular motions from the ball of the foot to the heel, crossing the arch, while maintaining the stretch.



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You may also find rolling your bare foot over a cold drinks can is helpful to ease your symptoms.

Because inappropriate footwear and/or faulty foot biomechanics (malalignment) can contribute to plantar fasciitis, an evaluation of your footwear and foot alignment is recommended.

Overpronation (when feet roll inward too much) is often a cause of this condition. Therefore an anti-pronation trainer with a firm heel counter, a medial foot bridge and good arch support can help to reduce your symptoms. These must only be worn if you are stretching your calf as directed by this leaflet.

A full biomechanical evaluation and a prescription for a specialised insole called a functional foot orthotic may be indicated.

Pain relief

To help us optimise your treatment, it is important that you have adequate pain relief. If you are suffering high levels of pain please seek advice from your pharmacist or GP.

Information

Please be aware that this handout is to be used as a guide. If you find these exercises painful please seek advice from your physiotherapist or GP.

Contacts

Please contact our reception on 01223 216633 to leave a message for your physiotherapist, or to enquire about appointments.

This information has been compiled by the Physiotherapy team at Addenbrooke's Hospital. You may receive this information during an appointment with a physiotherapist, from your GP or via our website at www.cuh.org.uk/outpatient-physio