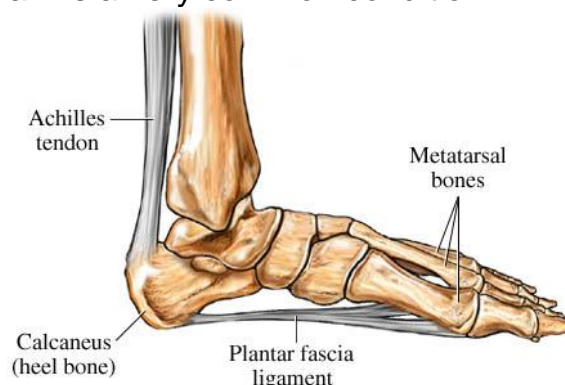


Plantar Fascia Pain

The plantar fascia is a flat band of connective tissue that runs from the sole to the heel of your foot. It keeps the bones and joints in position and enable us to transfer the muscle forces of the calf to the foot as we push off the ground. The plantar fascia is essential for everyday activities such as walking, running and jumping. Because we spend so much time on our feet, plantar fascia pain is a very common condition.



Plantar fascia pain occurs due to an overload on the tissues, which causes the fascia to become painful and irritated. The fascia is then unable to withstand as much load as normal, so it becomes more sensitive. This starts a self-perpetuating cycle as activity is reduced to avoid pain. It is common between 40-60 years of age and in people who spend a lot of time on their feet (especially if wearing unsupportive footwear). Runners are also prone to Plantar fascia pain due to increased training load.

When the plantar fascia gets overloaded it can become tender to touch, swollen and sore close to the heel. People often complain of morning pain (especially on the first few steps after getting out of bed or after prolonged sitting) that tends to ease with activity. However, in severe cases plantar fascia pain can be debilitating and persist throughout the day.. The goals of treatment are to decrease the initial pain and inflammation, improve flexibility and strengthen the plantar fascia and calf.

Common treatment modalities include ice, muscle release, stretching, specific strengthening exercises such as heel raises, and shockwave (see information sheet on radial shockwave therapy). A graded return to sport/activity is essential to ensure that the plantar fascia is not overloaded and that all the muscles and joints can adapt to an increase in workload.