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ORTHOPEDIC & SPORTS PHYSICAL THERAPY



A Common Runner's Injury: Plantar Fasciitis

Do you ever feel a burning or sharp pain under the arch in your foot when standing for a long period of time or during a long run?

In most cases this is a very common injury, called plantar fasciitis. Plantar fasciitis is inflammation and irritation of the thick fibrous tissue on the bottom of the foot. The plantar fascia is a coarse band that originates from the medial portion of one's heel and fans out to the base of the toes. The role of the plantar fascia is to support the arch of the foot during walking and assist in the development of push off power during running or jumping. So, it is not surprising that plantar fasciitis is prevalent in many active individuals such as runners and tennis players.

Signs and symptoms commonly associated with plantar fasciitis are:

- Pain on the bottom of foot when getting out of bed in the morning
 - Localized tenderness on the inside of the heel
- Dull ache after standing/walking for a long period of time
 - Sharp pain when walking barefoot

Good news! In the majority of cases, conservative intervention is successful in treating Plantar Fasciitis. Goals of treatment are focused on decreasing pain/inflammation in the fascia and improving the mechanics of the foot/ankle.

Some things you could try at home are:

1. **NSAIDS.** Once cleared by a physician, you can take an over the counter anti-inflammatory to control the inflammation and pain. Also, ice is recommended 10-15' on the bottom of the foot.
2. **Appropriate footwear.** Make sure to pay attention to the wear and tear of your shoes. It is generally recommended to purchase new running shoes every several months depending on what type of terrain you usually run on, mileage and body weight.
3. **Gentle massage** along the arch of the foot to improve the flexibility of the fascia which will allow for better shock absorption during walking.

Still not going away? Persistent arch pain that is causing an abnormal walking pattern will need specific interventions such as stretching of the muscles around the foot/ankle, deep frictional massage of the plantar fascia and specific strengthening of the arch muscles. Lastly, semi rigid or rigid orthotics can be very beneficial to control the mechanics of the foot/ankle to decrease the stress on the bottom of the foot during walking and running.

For more information on our Pedestrian and Sport Orthotics, see our brochure found on the website. You can make an appointment to have custom orthotics made at our office with Kai or Lindsey.

Contact your physician if you have any additional questions regarding Plantar Fasciitis.