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Stretching For Plantar Fasciitis

Plantar Fasciitis causes many people to experience intense heel pain in the morning, when taking the first steps after getting out of bed. This pain comes from the tightening of the plantar fascia that occurs during sleep. Stretching or massaging the plantar fascia before standing up will help reduce heel pain.

EXERCISES

1. Before standing up, stretch your foot by flexing up and down 10 times
2. Towel stretch – Grab a belt or a rolled towel at both ends, holding it under the ball of your foot. Gently pull the towel toward you while keeping your knee straight. Hold this position for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat 4 times.

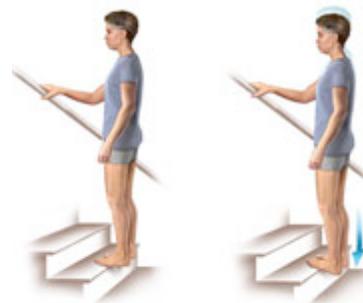


***** After these exercises, put on your shoes (with orthotics inside them) or wear supportive sandals. Do not start the day walking barefoot on hard floors or tiles, or your heel pain will return.**

3. Keeping both legs straight with your heels on the floor and toes straight forward, lean into the wall until a stretch is felt in the calf. Make sure you are wearing shoes. If keeping both legs straight is too difficult you can bend one leg and alternate as shown here. Hold the stretch for 2 minutes. Repeat.



4. Stand on a step or ledge as shown. Slowly let your heels down over the edge of the step as you relax your calf muscles. Hold the stretch for 15 to 20 seconds. Do not bounce. Repeat 4 times.



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Treatment for Plantar Fasciitis/Heel Spurs

Conservative care for plantar fasciitis pain consists of 3 treatments. These recommendations will relieve 80–90% of pain caused from plantar fasciitis or heel spurs. Remember the spur itself does not cause pain. It is the inflammation of the plantar fascia (the ligament on the bottom of the foot). There are 3 areas we want to concentrate on:

1. Proper shoes with proper supports (orthotics) is crucial. We recommend a cross trainer or running type shoe. Shoes must be worn at all times, even in the house. Most people also need an appropriate support in the shoe. We have several types available in the office including custom made orthotics. Be careful what you buy over-the-counter.
2. Ice therapy should be performed 3–4 times per day, 15–30 minutes at a time. Use an ice pack or frozen water bottle. If too cold, keep socks on or apply a thin towel over the ice.
3. Stretching exercise: **IMPORTANT:** These stretching exercises should not cause pain, but rather a pulling feeling. Try to do each exercise 3–4 times during the day; not necessarily all at one time.