

PLANTAR FASCIITIS

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Plantar fasciitis, commonly referred as heel pain, or heel spur pain, is probably the most common complaint heard in the podiatrist's office. The sufferer experiences any combination of the following: sharp pain in the heel or arch when first arising from sitting or reclining, that diminishes with walking; sharp pain and/or achiness in the heel or arch that increases with walking and often continues after sitting down. The pain can get severe enough to cause limping and guarding so that discomfort can begin elsewhere, even in the other foot or leg.

The affected part is called the plantar fascia or ligament. Running from the heel to the toes, this band of ligament can hurt anywhere along its length, but most commonly at its origin, the heel. Certain foot types are more prone to gradual injury of this band over a period of time. However, anyone can develop the problem. An improper relationship of the foot to the leg can allow tendons to pull in the wrong direction and fire in the wrong sequence. Over time, the bone in the heel can grow in the direction of the pulling, creating a heel spur. The heel spur does not cause the pain. The abnormal pulling caused both the pain and spur growth.

Causes of plantar fasciitis range from wearing poor footwear to strenuous activities not previously engaged in, to just the aging of the foot. The vast amount of concrete surfaces in most work places and malls certainly take their toll. Genetics contribute to our tendencies. There is no single cause.

It is best to treat this condition with an escalating protocol. Many podiatric offices believe every patient should be treated alike, involving every step of the protocol from the beginning, even though the symptoms and history are different. At Lititz Podiatry, we believe least is best, so a starting point in this treatment plan is determined for each patient according to clinical exam and history of injury. Inserts, injections, custom made orthotics, radio frequency, and endoscopic surgery are offered as needed. It is important to remember that the injury is similar to a slow-developing sprain and healing takes time, patience, and proper treatment, just like a sprain.