

Heel Spurs and Plantar Fasciitis

Heel pain that occurs on the bottom of the heel results from stretching within the soft tissues that make up the arch (plantar fascia). Prolonged standing, walking, running, poor foot structure, improper shoe gear and obesity are frequent causes. Your doctor has explained how your specific condition will be treated. The two most common approaches to treatment include reducing inflammation and supporting the heel. To reduce inflammation, oral medicine or a cortisone type injection may be recommended. To support the foot arch support devices (orthotics) and stable shoe gear are very helpful.

In conjunction to these treatments two simple exercises are recommended. Please follow the instructions and perform the exercises as described. It is important that you are faithful in doing the exercises so your doctor can properly assess your status and make appropriate suggestions for future treatment.

The Stair Step Stretch:

Find at least one stair at home or work. Place both feet squarely on one step while holding on to the railing or adjacent wall. Take the foot to be stretched and place it over the edge of the step so only the ball and toes of the foot are supported by the step. Transfer your weight on to this foot while allowing the heel to drop downward. You should feel a noticeable stretching sensation in the calf of the leg, the Achilles tendon and arch. Hold this position for at least 45 seconds. Do not bounce or attempt to do toe raisers on this foot. One repetition is all that is necessary. It would be helpful to perform this stretch on the opposite foot even if it is without pain. Perform this exercise at least four times per day or as often as you get a chance. Do not do it so much it causes pain.



Exercises:

Exercising will strengthen muscles that support in injured area and help prevent re-injury and chronic problems. **DO EACH PRESCRIBED EXERCISE TWO TIMES A DAY OR AS OFTEN AS YOUR DOCTOR RECOMMENDS.**

Stretches: Do stretch before and after activity. Lean against a table with your back knee locked and your front knee bent. Press forward until a moderate stretch is felt in the calf muscles of your straight leg. Hold 15 seconds. Keeping both heels on the floor, bend to knee of your straight leg until a moderate stretches is felt in your Achilles tendon. (The Achilles tendon attaches the muscles of the calf to the heel bone.) Hold 15 seconds. You should feel a moderate pull, but no pain. Change legs and stretch the other leg. Repeat 20 times, 2 times/ day.

