

Plantar Heel Pain

Advice and treatment

Plantar heel pain (often referred to as plantar fasciitis) is where you have pain on the bottom of your foot around your heel and the arch of your foot.

Signs and symptoms

This condition generally starts with pain under the heel or ball of your foot.

It is the irritation of the fibrous band under the foot, called the plantar-fascia, that connects your toes and heel bone.

It's often made worse by long periods of standing and walking and may also be acutely painful on first stepping on the heel after periods of rest, such as stepping out of bed in the morning.

It can be present in people who do long distance running.

This heel pain can be caused by:

- Being overweight
- Prolonged periods of standing at work
- Sudden increases in activity after period of inactivity
- Prolonged participation in an activity with minimal rest periods



You can find out more about heel pain (plantar fasciitis) – including causes, symptoms and treatment suggestions – from the NHS website

Visit NHS website [nhs.uk/conditions/plantar-fasciitis/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/plantar-fasciitis/)

Exercises

The following exercises should be completed to help improve mobility and strength of your calf muscles, and help you return to your normal activities.

These exercises are designed as a programme and should not all be completed at the initial stage of your symptoms. If these exercises make your symptoms worse to an unacceptable level then consider performing a different exercise.

1. Plantar fascia stretch (1)

Sit in a chair with one leg crossed over the other. Grasp the toes of the foot on top and gently pull them back toward the shin until you feel a stretch in the arch.

Hold for 30 seconds then relax and repeat 3 times a day.

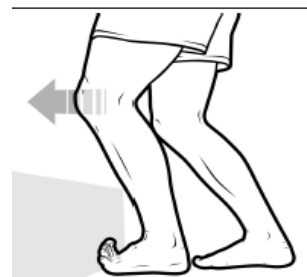


2. Plantar fascia stretch (2)

Place your toes in a flexed position up against a step. Slowly bend your knee until you feel a stretch in the calf or foot.

Hold for 30 secs and repeat 3-4 times a day.

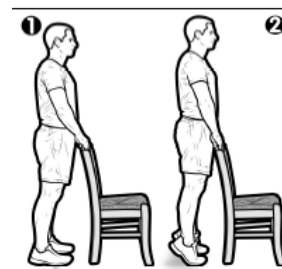
You may also want to have the knee straight and bring the hips close to the wall.



3. Chair assisted calf raises

Standing behind a chair for support (1), slowly rise up onto your toes as far as you can (2). Slowly lower and repeat.

Perform 10-20 reps, two to three times a day.

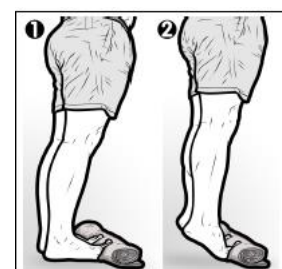


4. Plantar Fascia Strengthening: on flat

Stand with your toes extended over a towel roll (1) and slowly rise as high as you can (over 3 seconds), ensuring your toes are fully extended (2).

Hold for 2 seconds then lower (over 3 seconds) & repeat. Start with 3 x 8-12 reps.

This can be progressed through doing off the edge of a step and /or adding a weighted backpack.



Treating heel pain

What you can do

Treating the pain may take some time, but here are suggestions that may help. If your symptoms continue, please speak to your GP who may refer you to a physiotherapist or podiatrist

- Modify your activities – by reducing or avoiding running, excessive walking and standing for longer periods
- Apply ice – use a cold bottle or can from the freezer and roll it along the bottom of your foot for up to 10 minutes. Wear a thin sock to protect your skin, and do not do this if your sensation is impaired
- Footwear – For more information on footwear contacting referral to a podiatrist
- Medications – Pain relief can be helpful, but please speak to your GP or pharmacist for advice

Plantar heel pain can take many months to improve. If pain is accompanied with pins and needles or numbness you should visit your GP.

If the advice here is not helping your symptoms then speak to your GP to consider referral to a physiotherapist or podiatrist. Injections and surgery should only be considered once all other options have been explored.

How to contact us

Visit our webpage berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/physiotherapy

East Berkshire: Windsor, Maidenhead, Slough, Ascot, Bracknell

Call [0300 365 5678](tel:03003655678)

Email mskphysioadmin@berkshire.nhs.uk

West Berkshire: Wokingham, Newbury, Reading

Call [0118 9041 777](tel:01189041777)

Email admin.rdgphysio@berkshire.nhs.uk

