

Exercises

Exercises can be very effective in reducing foot and heel pain and related symptoms.

There are many exercises that following a full assessment may be appropriate for you and your specific problem but the following exercises are a good starting point and may help alleviate your symptoms without seeking further advice or treatment.

Only do the exercises within your pain limits. DO NOT force any exercise.

Ankle range of movement

Lying on your back with your knees straight. Gently pull your toes up towards you by moving your ankles then gently point your toes away.

Repeat 10 –15 times each way.

Imagine you have a pen between your toes and using large ankle movements draw the alphabet in the air.

Go from A to Z

Calf stretching

Stand facing a wall in a lunge position with the calf to be stretched at the back. Keep your back knee straight and gently bend your front knee to lunge forward to feel a gentle stretch in your back calf. Hold this for 20-30 seconds. Then try to bend your back knee slightly to feel a stretch lower in your calf. Hold this gentle stretch for a further 20-30 seconds.

Repeat 4 times each stretch.

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Advice for Foot and Heel Pain



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Foot and Heel Pain

There are many structures within the foot that can cause pain and loss of function. These include:

The Plantar fascia (Thick band of non elastic tissue under the foot)

The joints (mid foot and toes)

Ligaments

Muscles/tendons

Heel pad

On many occasions it is difficult to identify one specific structure at fault as each structure interacts with each other.

Foot pain can be acute or chronic. Acute foot pain can be the result of a single specific incident or the accumulation of poor behaviours or movements i.e. during walking. Acute foot pain is often associated with inflammation and muscle spasm, whereas chronic pain can be as a result of degenerative changes and general wear and tear to structures particularly the joints of the mid foot and big toe.

Plantar fasciitis

Plantar fasciitis is also known as policeman's heel and is a painful condition affecting the heel of the foot. The pain is most commonly in the centre part of the heel but can radiate towards the toes or on either side of the foot. Typically you get pain first thing in the morning as you stand out of bed, towards the end of the day or after any prolonged sitting. The plantar fascia attaches deep to your heel bone (calcaneum) and becomes inflamed and then develops collagen or scar tissue which is tighter than normal tissue. When you load this tissue it gets torn and so the cycle continues.

Treatments for Foot and Heel Pain

Following a full and thorough assessment of your movement and dysfunction, a chartered physiotherapist could offer the following techniques to help alleviate your symptoms and restore you to full function.

Biomechanical correction

Gait re-education

Deep soft tissue massage

Taping/strapping

Myofascial release

Electrotherapy including interferential and ultrasound

Acupuncture

Trigger point techniques

Joint mobilisations

Joint manipulations

Core stability

Exercise programme

Rehabilitation back to sport or work activity

Simple advice for when you have Foot or Heel Pain

- DO** have your trainers or low heeled shoes beside your bed and put them on as soon as you get out of bed and wear them around the house to avoid walking around bare footed
- DO** put a small bottle of water or can of drink in the freezer and at regular intervals roll it under the arch of your foot for 10 mins.
- DO** use a foot spa if you have access to one
- DO** Sit down and take the weight of your feet to avoid prolonged standing or walking
- DO** Stand with your weight evenly balanced.
- DON'T** **Ignore the problem as what starts as a little niggle can lead you to alter your walking and cause secondary problems further up your lower legs or even into your back.**