



DynamicHealth



## Heel and Foot Pain, Advice and Exercises (Plantar Fasciitis)



Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust: delivering excellence in  
musculo-skeletal services and pelvic health physiotherapy across  
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

If your heel pain has come on following recent trauma please contact your GP or Minor Injury Unit.

This booklet has been produced by senior physiotherapists working for DynamicHealth. It offers simple advice and exercises to help you safely manage your foot problem, often the right advice and exercises are all that is needed. This leaflet has been made available to your GP, who may ask you to try the advice and exercises prior to physiotherapy assistance.

## **Plantar Fasciitis**

Plantar Fasciitis is a cause of pain under your heel. It usually goes in time with the correct self-management. Treatment may speed up recovery. Treatments include rest, good footwear, insoles (orthoses), painkillers and stretching exercises. A steroid injection or other treatments may be used in more severe cases.

## **What is Plantar Fasciitis?**

Plantar Fasciitis means inflammation of your plantar fascia (although often there is no inflammation involved). Your plantar fascia is a strong band of tissue (like a ligament) that stretches from your heel to your toes. It supports the arch of your foot and also acts as a shock-absorber in your foot.

## **What causes Plantar Fasciitis?**

Repeated small injuries to the fascia (with or without inflammation) are thought to be the cause. The injury is usually near to where the plantar fascia attaches to your heel bone.

You are more likely to injure your plantar fascia in certain situations. For example:

- If you are on your feet for a lot of the time e.g. walking, standing, running.
- If you have recently started exercising on a different surface.
- If you have been wearing shoes with poor cushioning, with poor arch support.
- If you are overweight – this will put extra strain on your heel if there is an overuse or stretching of your sole e.g. athletes who increase running intensity or distances.
- If you have a tight Achilles Tendon.

## **Top 5 Tips**

1. Wear sensible well-fitting shoes, e.g. trainers.
2. Pace your activities by alternating activity with rest.
3. Do not walk around without footwear or unsupportive footwear e.g. flip flops.
4. Take the pain medication your GP has prescribed.
5. Try an ice pack on your heel for 10 minutes (wrap it in a damp towel to avoid an ice burn).

Do not use ice on your foot if you have poor sensation over the area, an infected wound, Raynauds Syndrome, or Cryoglobulinaemia.

# Exercise Programme

Please complete exercises A,B and C **everyday** for 12 weeks alongside either Level 1, 2 or 3, which you will be guided through in the rest of the booklet.



## A) Toe Curls

1. Standing or sitting with your foot on the floor.
2. Curl your toes, pressing down into the floor.
3. Hold 10 seconds
4. Repeat 10 times



## B) Toe Extension Stretch

1. Sit on a chair, crossing the affected leg over the opposite knee.
2. Using the opposite hand to the injured side, place fingers across the base of the toes on the bottom of the foot.
3. Pull the toes back toward the shin until you feel a stretch in the arch of the foot
4. Hold approx. 30-60 secs.
5. Repeat 5 times



## C) Standing Heel Raises

1. Push up on your toes, and slowly lower back down.
2. Repeat 10 times.

Carry out each exercise as described in the text next to the exercise.

**Please start on Level 1 and complete for two weeks.**

### **Level 1**

On the edge of a step, stand on affected leg with towel rolled up under your toes.

Raise up onto toes as high as possible - taking 3 seconds to complete the movement.

Hold at the top for 2 seconds.

Then slowly lower your heel down as far as possible, taking 3 seconds to lower.

Complete 12 repetitions, three times in a row (36 heel raises in a row) every other day for two weeks.

Once complete please move to Level 2.

Continue to complete your everyday exercises.



**Please start Level 2 and complete for six weeks (you no longer need to complete Level 1 exercises).**

## **Level 2**

Wearing a back pack, add enough weight (you can use anything ,books/water bottles work well) so that you can only do 10 repetitions.

On the edge of a step, standing on affected leg with towel rolled up under your toes.

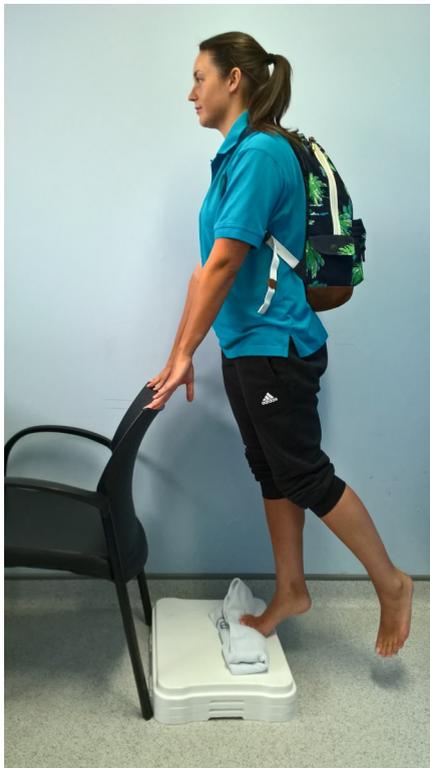
Raise up onto toes as high as possible, taking 3 seconds to complete the movement.

Hold at the top for 2 seconds.

Please complete every other day.

Once complete, please move to Level 3.

Continue to complete your everyday exercises.



**Please start Level 3 and continue for at least four weeks, even if your pain has resolved. (You no longer need to complete Level 2 exercises).**

### **Level 3**

**Add more weight to the backpack until you can only complete 8 repetitions.**

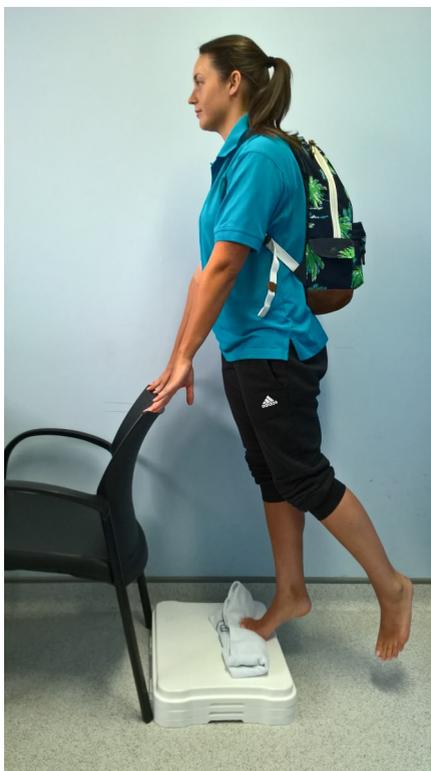
On the edge of a step, standing on affected leg with towel rolled up under your toes.

Raise up onto toes as high as possible - taking 3 seconds to complete the movement.

Hold at the top for 2 seconds.

Then slowly lower your heel down as far as possible ,taking 3 seconds to lower.

Your symptoms should have significantly improved if not resolved after this 12 week programme



If your symptoms have not improved with these exercises, please contact the podiatry team from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust on 0330 726 0077 or download a self referral form at the bottom of this page:

<https://www.cpft.nhs.uk/service-detail/service/podiatry-service-99/>

## How can I improve my general aerobic fitness?

In short anything that raises your heart rate.

Two main ways are:

1. Through activity - swimming, walking, cycling, fitness classes etc.
2. By adding a warm up to your strengthening exercises - marching on the spot, and seated marching on the spot.

You can find the latest information on local fitness schemes on our website -

<http://www.eoemskservice.nhs.uk/community>

or by scanning the QR code.



## For further information about this service contact:

**General Enquiries:** 0300 555 0123

Physiotherapy Dept, Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, Hinchingsbrooke Park, Huntingdon, Cambs PE29 6NT

Physiotherapy Dept, Brookfields Campus, 351 Mill Road, Cambridge, CB1 3DF

Physiotherapy Dept, Princess of Wales Hospital, Lynn Road, Ely, Cambs, CB6 1DN

Physiotherapy Dept, Doddington Hospital, Benwick Road, Doddington, Cambs, PE15 0UG

Physiotherapy Dept, Rowan Lodge, North Cambs Hospital, The Park, Wisbech, Cambs, PE13 3AB

Physiotherapy Dept, City Care Centre, Thorpe Road, Peterborough, PE3 6DB

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For free, confidential health advice and information 24 hours a day, 365 days a year please contact NHS 111.