



Coast Podiatry Group

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Heel and Arch Pain

Often referred to as plantar fasciitis or heel spur syndrome, it is one of the most common and easily treated foot problems. *The Active Foot Store* products can provide tremendous relief of pain.

Symptoms

Some people describe the pain as sharp, others describe it as dull and burning. It is often most painful after a period of rest, especially in the morning with the first step. Pressure on the heel and arch reproduce the pain. This condition may appear suddenly, due to an injury, or present gradually over time.

Cause

There are many different medical conditions that can cause heel and arch pain. The most common cause is improper foot function while walking or standing. This results in plantar fasciitis, which is an inflammation of the plantar fascia, a dense fibrous band that runs from your heel to the ball of your foot.

How We Walk

As we walk, called gait, our feet ideally move in different directions, supination and pronation. When we are preparing to take a step, our foot needs to be a firm, stable platform. Our arches rise up and lock in place (supination). When we land our arches unlock and start to lower (pronation), allowing us to absorb shock. Ideally, during normal walking, our foot should go through both these motions. Unfortunately not everyone is built perfectly and often our arches unlock excessively or fail to lock properly, (excessive pronation). This is sometimes referred to as a "flat foot" or "fallen arches" or "collapsed arches." This flexible or pronated foot results in a foot that elongates and stretches the dense fibrous band or plantar fascia on the bottom our foot, resulting in pain. Custom orthotics, individually designed for you, can help you walk in a more "ideal" way and alleviate heel and arch pain

Children's Heel Pain

Heel pain can also occur in children. Although it may be plantar fasciitis, there are other causes. Heel pain, presents most commonly between the ages 8 and 13, when they become increasingly active in sports activity. This physical activity, particularly jumping, inflames the growth centers (apophysis) of the heels. This problem is often aggravated by shoes with cleats, common in soccer and baseball. When the bones mature, the problems disappear and are not likely to recur. If heel pain occurs in this age group, care is necessary to protect the growing bone and to provide pain relief until that time. *The Active Foot Store's* custom orthotics can help provide relief until they mature.

Treatment

- When the arch pain is pronation related (flat feet), a custom orthotic, designed with proper arch support is recommended for treating the pain. This type of orthotic will control over-pronation, support the arch and decrease stretch on the fascia band.
- If pain and other symptoms of inflammation, such as redness, swelling, heat persists, you should limit normal daily activities and ice the heel and arch for 10 minutes twice a day.
- With the permission of your physician you may take oral anti-inflammatories such as Aleve or Advil.
- Sleeping with a night splint, to stretch the plantar fascia and Achilles tendon, is helpful.
- Wear shoes that fit well. . Proper shoes have support heel counters and rigid shanks. *The Active Foot Store* has a large selection of shoes that will help in alleviating heel and arch pain.
- Wear the proper shoes for each activity.
- Prepare properly before exercising. Warm up and do stretching exercises before and after activities.
- If overweight, lose weight
- If the problem persists, consult your foot specialist.

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