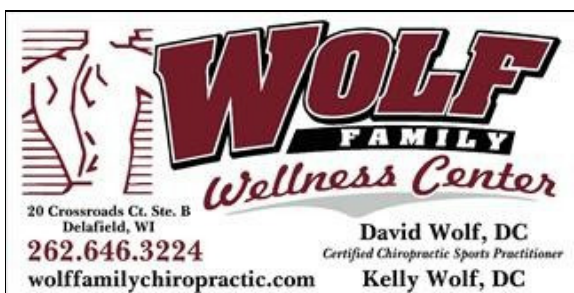


June 2009 Newsletter

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Plantar Fasciitis

What Causes Plantar Fasciitis and Heel Spurs?

Plantar fasciitis and heel spurs are conditions caused by such factors as:

1. too much standing;
2. unpadded shoes on hard ground;
3. poor shoes;
4. repetitive stress;
5. diets low in vitamin C;
6. a change or increase in activities;
7. being overweight;
8. age-related shrinkage of the heel fat pad (a.k.a. fat pad atrophy);
9. an injury.

Bad shoes are those that

1. have poor or no arch support;
2. do not have a raised heel;
3. are worn out
4. do not bend at the ball of the foot
5. do not have any cushion and are worn on a hard surface

What Are the Symptoms of Plantar Fasciitis and Heel Spurs?

The pain is usually in the front and bottom of the heel. It can also be over the entire bottom area of the foot. The pain can be mild or debilitating. It can last a few months or a lifetime. It can go away by itself, only to return in a few weeks or months.

If you have heel pain at the inside, front and bottom of your heel, especially if it's in the morning or after sitting a long time, then you probably have plantar fasciitis (heel spur). When the pain is severe, it is believed to be the result of bone and/or nerve irritation that is the result of too much tension, inflammation or scar tissue in the fascia. The pain often increases with more walking and standing. The pain is usually where the fascia attaches to the heel, but it can be over the entire bottom area of the foot.

If the heel pain began concurrently with a change or increase in activity, or an increase in weight, then it can be considered more of a cause of plantar fasciitis (heel spur). A stress fracture where the fascia attaches to the heel is sometimes seen in bone scans. Fifty percent of the sufferers say the pain is constant. About 90 percent say it hurts when pressed deeply with a finger.

What Is the Treatment for Plantar Fasciitis and Heel Spurs?

The most successful treatments include gentle stretching of the calf muscles, decreasing or changing activities, losing weight, better fitting shoes (with an arch support and raised heel), custom made orthotics, heel pads (1/2" or more when compressed), applying ice for five minutes after activities, and anti-inflammatory medication such as aspirin, Aleve or ibuprofen.

Many sufferers swear by Birkenstock sandals (which provide good arch support similar to good inserts).

Trying to "walk through or ignore the pain" can cause a mild case to become long-term and debilitating.

Home Care Routines

1. Daily massage of the feet or ankles.
2. Decrease activity or switch to exercises that keep the weight off of the feet such as stationary bike riding or swimming. Avoid or modify anything that causes an increase in pain. Be patient, it may take months of reduced activity. Increase activities very slowly. Complete rest is not good, as some activity is necessary for recovery.
3. Stretching. Stretching is often recommended. In the few cases where it is caused by a sudden injury, stretching and strengthening may not be necessary. Stretching can reinjure the traumatized fascia.
4. Arch support and medial wedges. Certain shoes or custom-made orthotics can give more arch support. Heel pads can sometimes be worn under inserts.
5. Reduce inflammation with ice, anti-inflammatory medication, compression and elevation. The swelling may not be noticeable, but it is often there and causes pain by putting pressure on tissue in the area.
6. Ice immediately after activities or injury. Place ice on a towel, step on it and roll it under the feet for five minutes. Repeat every hour until bedtime.

When Will My Feet Get Better?

It is important for you to be active in the treatment of your foot problem. Poor compliance with home care or prescribed treatment means your treatment will take far longer than it should. If there is little improvement after a few weeks or months of proper treatment, our office will refer you to a podiatrist or another appropriate specialist. Those who delay seeking treatment, have it in both feet or are overweight are more likely to have it for a long time before they see improvement.

Foot Levelers Foot Scans and Orthotics on Special This Month!!!

Save now on a Foot Scan with report and pair of orthotics that are custom made to your feet. Experience the luxury of Foot Levelers orthotics, which cushion all three arches of the foot. By supporting the feet, many of our patients have found relief from spinal pain and muscle fatigue.

Save \$25 on Foot Levelers Orthotics

Are you curious??? Come in for a free Foot Scan and Report.