

Wyre Forest Health Partnership

The exercises should not increase your pain during or after completion.

Some exercises are variations to give you choice or progressions of previous exercises, this is stated on the individual exercise.

There are some progressions for individual exercises.

Please complete the program 1-2 times a day.

2 Sets / 1 Rep / 2 min duration

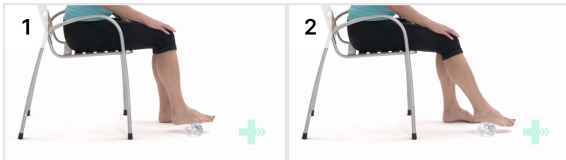
1. Plantar fascia stretch using ice bottle

Take a bottle of water and freeze it.

Wrap the bottle in a towel and place it on the floor.

Roll the sole of your foot over the bottle to help reduce inflammation and to stretch the tissues out.

Complete either this or the "plantar fascia ball roll" exercise each time you complete the program. Please complete 2 sets of 2 minutes massaging with the bottle.



2 Sets / 1 Rep / 2 min duration

2. Self massage to foot arch

Sit up straight.

Pull the leg of your affected foot in towards you, allowing your knee to drop out to the side.

Place some cream in the arch of your foot, lightly rubbing it in in circles.

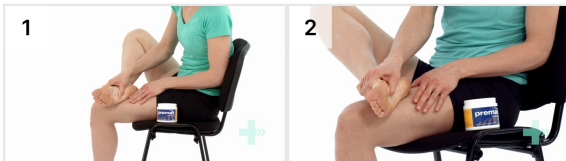
Using the tips of your fingers or your thumb, with some gentle pressure, slowly run your fingers from the ball of your foot to your heel in a straight line.

This can be performed in either direction.

Ensure you do this movement on the middle and outer side of your foot arch too.

Regularly swap hands to prevent them tiring.

This will feel slightly uncomfortable but shouldn't cause more than a 3 out of 10 scale for pain. Please complete for 2 sets of 2 minutes massaging.



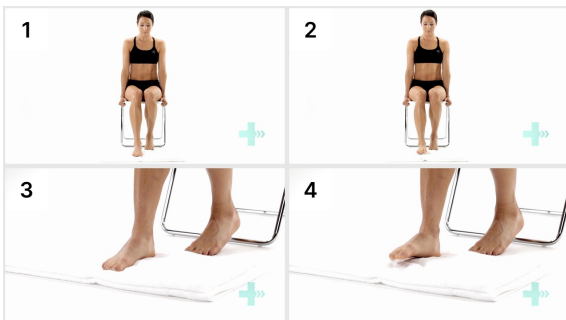
2 Sets / 5 Reps

3. Toe curl with towel

Start in a seated position.

Spread a thin towel on the floor in front of you and place your foot on the end of the towel.

Keep your heel on the floor and use your toes to try to pull the towel towards you.



4. Isometric plantar flexion in long sit against ball - knee extended

Sit with your legs straight out in front of you, for example on a mat.

Your feet should be close to a wall.

Place a ball between the sole of your foot and the wall.

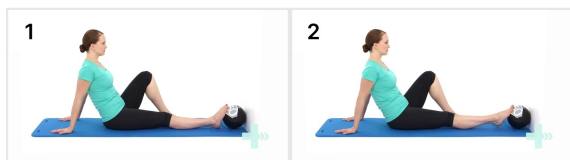
Move forwards or backwards until you have your ankle in a neutral position at 90 degrees against the ball.

Press the ball of your foot into the ball, keeping your knee straight.

Hold this position.

Relax, and repeat.

Complete either this or the "knee flexed" exercise each time you complete the program. You can complete this by pushing directly on the wall/solid surface without a ball. You can progress by increasing the hold by 5 seconds every week up to 20 seconds. At that point you can increase to 2 sets and start again at 10 seconds holds.



1 Set / 6 Reps / 10 s hold

5. Isometric plantar flexion in long sit against ball - knee flexed

Sit with your legs straight out in front of you, for example on a mat.

Your feet should be close to a wall.

Place a ball between the sole of your foot and the wall.

Move forwards or backwards until you have your ankle in a neutral position at 90 degrees against the ball.

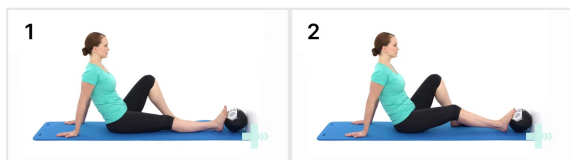
Your knee should be slightly bent.

Press the ball of your foot into the ball, keeping your knee in the same bent position.

Hold this position.

Relax, and repeat.

Complete either this or the "knee extended" exercise each time you complete the program. You can complete this by pushing directly on the wall/solid surface without a ball. You can progress by increasing the hold by 5 seconds every week up to 20 seconds. At that point you can increase to 2 sets and start again at 10 seconds holds.



2 Sets / 6 Reps / 5 s hold

6. Isometric calf strength

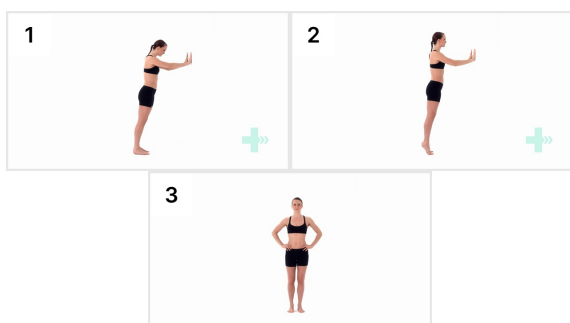
Hold on to a wall or table for balance.

Rise up on to both toes, keeping your legs straight.

Transfer your weight over to your affected side, keeping the heel raised and leg straight.

Hold this position, then lower on both legs.

This is a progression from the 2 "isometric plantar flexion" exercises. You can progress this exercise further by increasing the hold in 1 seconds increments every week up to 10 seconds. At this point, you can increase to 3 sets but start at 5 seconds hold again.



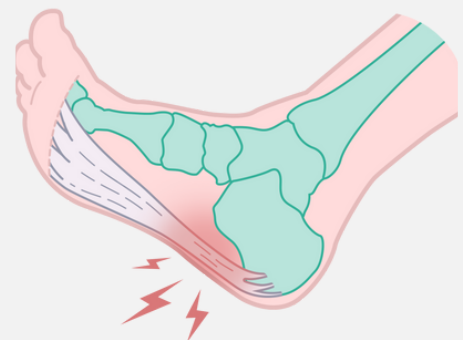
PLANTAR FASCIOPATHY

What is plantar fasciopathy?

Plantar fasciopathy, often referred to as Plantar fasciitis, is a prevalent condition that causes pain in the bottom of the heel. Although it can be a significant and distressing issue, the majority of cases will respond to conservative treatment methods and heal effectively.

The plantar fascia is the thickened tissue on the sole of your foot. It pads the foot as well as having elastic properties to help transmit the forces of the calf muscle, allowing you to spring. It provides shape to your foot arch, providing shock absorption and an even distribution of your weight as you put weight through your leg.

Overloading this fascia through excessive stress can lead to irritation or, in some cases, inflammation, resulting in pain. The pain typically occurs when bearing the body's weight on your feet.



This overuse might occur during periods of increased physical activity, such as a hiking trip, or from extended wear of unsupportive footwear, like switching to sandals in the summer after wearing supportive, lace-up shoes throughout the rest of the year. Plantar fasciopathy is prevalent among individuals who spend extensive periods standing or walking. Additional risk factors include being overweight and being in middle age or older.

What can I do about it?

Plantar fasciopathy can significantly impact daily life, causing considerable pain and restricting normal activities. It is not uncommon for recovery to take up to six months or even a year. However, the prognosis is generally positive. With patience, self-care, and, when necessary, assistance from a healthcare professional, most individuals will see improvement over time.

Although the plantar fascia is technically not a tendon, the treatment approach for this condition is similar to that of tendon-related issues.

1. Rest and load management phase

If the symptoms have just started, or lasted few weeks, the primary goal is to alleviate pain and reduce stress on the tissues (i.e. load management). For the first few weeks, consider resting your feet more than you typically would. Weight-bearing activities, such as walking and running, often exacerbate the condition. Therefore, it's important to either temporarily reduce these activities or substitute them with low-impact exercises like swimming or cycling, which exert less stress on the plantar fascia.

Exploring different footwear options may also be beneficial. Wearing flat, loose, unsupportive shoes can worsen the pain. Shoes that offer arch support and laces for a secure fit are often more comfortable. For those experiencing sharp pain making normal walking difficult, using a special shoe insert or an orthotic insole may provide relief. Taping the foot can also offer support and reduce pain during movement. However, it's important to note that orthoses or taping should not be the only treatments relied upon but rather part of a comprehensive approach that includes effective load management as well as progressive exercise therapy.

Lifestyle and health behaviours, such as weight management, adequate sleep, good nutrition, and overall well-being, also play a significant role in musculoskeletal health and can notably affect heel pain.

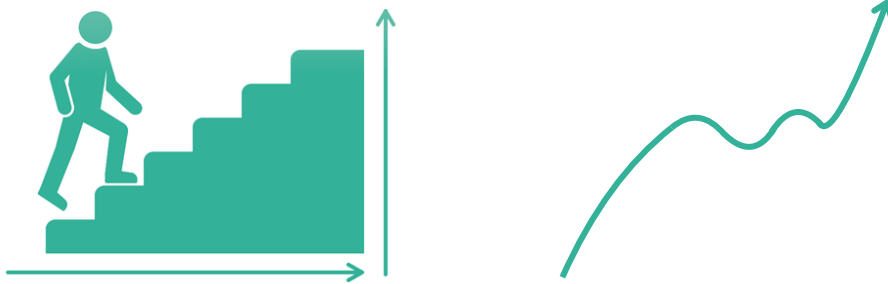
Tip. *You can also try if a gentle massage of the foot's bottom, possibly with a tennis ball or similar object eases your pain.*

2. Loading phase

After a month or so, if there's no improvement in your condition, a more proactive approach is necessary. Merely resting might not be sufficient to resolve the issue, as the muscles in your feet may require strengthening. This involves gradually increasing the load on the tissue and strengthening the foot muscles. In certain cases, stretching the calves and the bottom of the foot may also prove to be a beneficial addition.

Moreover, managing the load is crucial. Tracking your steps and aiming to gradually increase them can help. If pain intensifies, it's wise to ease back for a few days before gradually adding more steps to build tolerance to the load.

Strengthening exercises should be also progressively intensified, with adjustments made based on your symptoms. At this stage, consulting a physiotherapist or a healthcare professional specializing in foot issues is advisable. They can provide personalized guidance on strengthening exercises and load management.



Gradually increasing load or intensity step-by-step over time is crucial. Yet it is good to be aware that progress, guided by symptom management, often follows a non-linear path with occasional setbacks.

Treating plantar fasciopathy requires time and patience. Fortunately, invasive procedures like surgery or injections are rarely necessary. However, if the pain persists or if symptoms evolve into more severe conditions, such as numbness in the toes or pain while resting or at night, seeking medical advice is crucial.

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