

Fullerton Foot and Ankle Specialists
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Plantar Fascitis:

Home Treatment Protocol

The plantar fascia is a fibrous band (a ligament) on the bottom of the foot that begins at the heel bone and extends through the arch and into the toes. When the fascia becomes injured and cannot stretch and expand with the foot, it can begin to strain and small tears of the fibers ensue. This sets up an inflammatory response and the onset of pain. This then is called Plantar Fascitis. The pain is frequently worst when taking the first few steps out of bed, or after prolonged period of sitting. Tightness of the Achilles tendon applies directly to the tightness of the plantar fascia.

This condition is mechanically induced, therefore requires and mechanical solution. The goal then becomes to reduce the stress and tension to the ligament. This is accomplished by a strict regimen of external cushioning and support and increasing flexibility and elasticity of the fascia. Support can be accomplished by use over-the-counter arch support or even better and more appropriate, custom molded orthotics in order to reduce the load on the plantar fascia.

The following is the home treatment protocol that was discussed by your doctor. Please familiarize yourself with this routine for the next 2 to 4 weeks to assist in the treatment of your condition.

ICE Therapy: *2-4 times a day; 10-15 minutes/ treatment:*

Using an ice pack placed on the bottom of the heel and the arch. Freeze a water bottle and massage the heel and the arch by rolling the bottle on the floor with your foot.

MEDICATIONS: The doctor may advise a course of anti-inflammatories.

STRETCH Therapy: *AM Each Day; 1 minute 4-6 times a day:*

BEFORE taking first steps out of bed:

1. Using a towel or a rope or a physical therapy band by your bedside, place around the bottom of the ball of your foot. Hold each end with your hands and pull your foot up and feel the stretch on the bottom of the foot and in the Achilles tendon. It is very important to be done in the morning before getting out of bed.
2. Face a wall. Stand a few feet from the wall and lean into the wall with the palm of your hands flat on the wall. Slightly bend the knee of the forward leg toward the wall. Keep the back leg straight and keep the heel on the floor and the foot pointing forward. Now lean into the wall. You will feel the stretch in the back leg in the calf. Now slightly bend the back knee as well. Again, lean into the wall. This will stretch the Achilles tendon and give a deep stretch and maintain flexibility.

REST: *2-4 weeks:* Decrease your activity level. Decrease your level of pressure and force through your foot during this time of healing in order to relive strain and reduce continued damage.

Shoe Gear: *2-4 weeks:* No Barefoot. No slippers. No flip flops or flats. Supportive athletic shoes should be worn to reduce the strain on the plantar fascia during the healing process. Even at home.

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