

Sports Injuries

Whether you are a veteran runner or just beginning, little aches and pains are common to all. These can be prevented with a bit of knowledge about the body and how it responds to running. This section will discuss a series of running injuries and provide a little information so that you can catch an injury before it worsens and learn to prevent further problems. The first injury that I will discuss is plantar fasciitis.

Plantar Fasciitis

What is it?

Plantar fasciitis is an inflammation of the thick fibrous tissue that covers the bottom of the foot from the heel to the base of the toes. Pain is most commonly located at the origin of the plantar fascia on the inside of the heel bone (on the medial tubercle of the calcaneus). Pain is usually worse during the first few steps out of bed in the morning or after standing for a prolonged period. The pain will get better as you get moving, but may come back with running or prolonged walking in poor footwear.

As the condition progresses, pain will be felt throughout the heel and is especially noticeable in the push off phase of walking. Without treatment, the constant pull of the plantar fascia on the bone may produce a heel spur.



Causes:

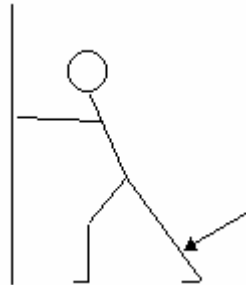
- Training errors (rapid progression, hill workouts)
- Tight calf muscles
- Abnormal foot biomechanics (usually over pronation)
- Flat or high arches
- Weak muscles on the bottom of the foot
- Worn out running shoes or inappropriate footwear
- Sudden increase in body weight

What can you do about it?

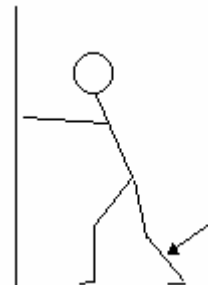
- Modify training
Stop running!! Once you get the inflammatory cycle going, it will not stop until you give your body a rest. Try pool running or easy cycling as alternative forms of exercise.
- Ice and use of anti-inflammatory (ibuprofen) medications

- STRETCH your calf muscles
 - Hold the stretch for at least 30 seconds with your knee straight and with your knee bent

Gastrocnemius



Soleus



- Massage your arch:
 - Before getting out of bed (this is when it will hurt the most) rub your arch in the painful area
 - Use a rolling pin or a tennis ball to massage the bottom of your foot throughout the day
- Return to running by incorporating a walk/run program

What do you do if it doesn't go away?

Consult your physiotherapist or other health care professional

- Taping to support the arch can alleviate pain in the short term, but if the problem doesn't resolve in a couple weeks orthotics may be necessary.
- Deep frictions to massage out the scar tissue
- Physiotherapy modalities (ultrasound, laser etc.)
- Exercises to strengthen the intrinsic muscles of the foot
 - Pick up marbles or golf balls with your toes
 - Place a towel on the floor and scrunch it up
- Night splints (only if it's really bad)

Do you want more information?? Check out these web sites:

1. www.drpribut.com/sports/
2. www.veggie.org/run/plantar-fasciitis.shtml
3. www.pponlin.co.uk/encyc/0180.htm
4. www.time-to-run.com/injuries/thebig5/plantar.htm
5. www.nismat.org/ptcor/plantar/
6. www.sportsmedicine.about.com/cs/

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