



Patient & Family Guide  
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# Plantar Fasciitis Exercises



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# Plantar Fasciitis Exercises

## What is plantar fasciitis?

Plantar fasciitis is inflammation (swelling, redness) of the plantar fascia. The plantar fascia is a long band of fibers that goes from your toes to your heel. It helps support the arch of your foot and absorbs shock. Plantar fasciitis is caused by repeated tears in the plantar fascia. Over time, these small tears cause inflammation (swelling).

## What increases my risk for plantar fasciitis?

- High impact exercise, such as running, dancing, or aerobics
- Obesity
- Flat feet or high arches
- Tight calf muscles and tendons
- An abnormal walking pattern, such as feet that roll inward or outward
- Standing on a hard surface for long periods of time. For example, at work
- Wearing shoes that do not support your feet, like sandals or worn out shoes



## How can I help prevent plantar fasciitis?

- **Maintain a healthy weight:** This will help lower the stress on your feet. Ask your health care team what you can do if this is an issue.
- **Wear shoes that fit well and support your arches:** Replace your shoes before the padding or shock absorption wears out. Avoid walking or standing in bare feet or sandals for long periods of time.
- **Stretch your feet:** Pull your toes toward your head to stretch the bottom of each foot. Do this before you get out of bed and when you get up after sitting for a long time. Warm up and stretch before and after you exercise.

## Heel spurs

A heel spur is a small bony growth on the heel bone. Although many people with plantar fasciitis have heel spurs, spurs are not the cause of plantar fasciitis. Plantar fasciitis can be treated without removing the heel spur because the spur is not the cause of the pain.



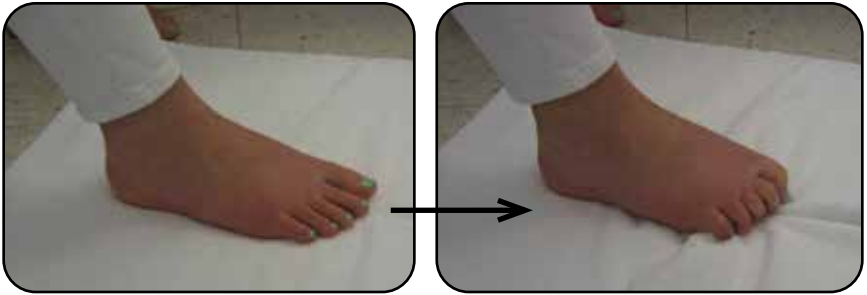
# Plantar fasciitis exercises

**Try an ice bottle massage to help with painful plantar fasciitis:**

1. Fill a plastic bottle about 3/4 full of tap water. Make sure it is not filled to the top, so there is room for the water to expand as it freezes. Keep the cap off the bottle as the water freezes, but save the cap.
2. Freeze the bottle in the freezer and put the cap back on before using the bottle for ice massage.
3. Sit on a chair and lay the ice bottle on the floor on its side.
4. Slowly roll your foot over the bottle, then press gently into the bottle to massage your painful plantar fascia.
5. You can do the ice bottle massage for 10 to 15 minutes several times a day. Put the bottle in the freezer after each use.

## Towel curls

- Sit in a chair. Place your foot on a towel on the floor and scrunch the towel toward you with your toes.
- Then, also using your toes, push the towel away from you.
- Make this exercise harder by putting a weighted object, such as a can of soup, on the end of the towel away from your toes.



## Marble pick-ups

Put marbles on the floor next to a cup. Using your toes, try to lift the marbles up from the floor and put them in the cup.



## Plantar fascia stretch

Stretching your plantar fascia and calf muscles can increase flexibility and decrease heel pain. You can do this exercise several times each day, and before and after activity.

1. Stand on a step as shown. Hold on to the railing.



2. Slowly let your heels down below the edge of the step as you relax your calf muscles. You should feel a gentle stretch across the bottom of your feet and up the back of your legs to your knees.



3. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds, then tighten your calf muscles a little to bring your heels back up to the level of the step. Repeat 2 to 4 times.

