

Bellevue Podiatric Physicians

What is it?

Most heel and arch pain is related to the straining or inflammation of the plantar fascia ligament on the bottom of the foot. This is called plantar fasciitis, but is also commonly known as heel spur syndrome. This ‘pulled’ ligament makes walking and standing difficult because with weight bearing on the foot the ligament is stretched.

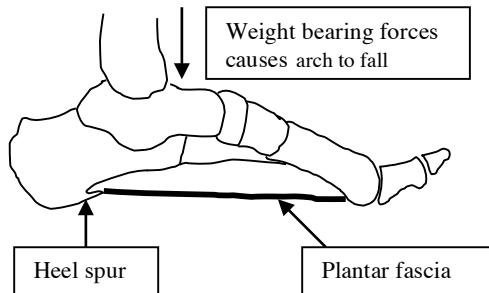
Heel Pain

(Plantar Fasciitis)

Does the heel spur cause the pain?

No! While the bottom of the heel bone often has a sharp spur when xrayed, it has very little significance as far as pain. In other words many people have large heel spurs that don’t hurt and others have painful heels without any sign of a spur. Our goal is pain relief not to remove the spur!

“Plantar fasciitis is one of the most common conditions seen in a podiatrist’s office.”



How did I get it?

The majority of patients with this condition do not remember how they got it. It usually comes from an insidious injury or overuse. Common risk factors include: Weight bearing vocations such as retail work, obesity, long distance running, ill supportive shoes, or overuse such as starting out on a workout program too vigorously.

Mechanics

The foot contains a pulley system known as the windlass mechanism. It is a system using the plantar fascia ligament that helps to put resilience or ‘spring’ into each step. This also means that each time the foot comes down the plantar fascia ligament is stretched quite tight.

It is this repetitive stretch with each step that can exacerbate an otherwise minor injury.

What the plantar fascia ligament needs is rest, and that is very hard to do with the need to walk and stand everyday. This condition would heal much quicker if you could : hop on the other foot, lay in bed all day, or use a wheelchair. While these are treatment options may sound extreme, they do point out how much we rely on our feet.

It is our job as the foot specialist to give the ligament some rest while allowing you to move about somewhat during the day and avoid the need to crutches or a wheelchair.

Our stepwise treatment program

We have developed a stepwise approach to treating your plantar fasciitis condition. It contains **three phases** and begins with conservative measures and continues to more aggressive measures depending on what it takes to alleviate your symptoms. Sometimes the condition is resolved with phase one treatment, other times it takes all three phases of treatment. Keep in mind that the longer you’ve had the pain, the longer it will take to get it resolved. The three phases are listed on the back of this sheet. You can help guide your doctor in how quickly or slowly you progress through each phase.