

ankle&foot

centers of georgia

“Keeping Life In Motion”

Plantar Fasciitis and Heel Spur Syndrome

At Home Physical Therapy

Plantar fasciitis is caused by a tearing of the plantar fascial ligament that helps support the long arch of the foot. Part of the recovery of this torn ligament requires that you perform some physical therapy at home to help with the healing process.

It is very important that you do this exercise in the morning before you get up and put your weight on the ground:

1. Place a towel, sheet or belt behind your toes/forefoot. Pull back on the towel as though pulling on the reins of a horse. Hold this position for 7 seconds. Release your hold. Repeat process 10 times. This allows the fascial ligament to be stretched.

The following exercises are performed while soaking your foot in warm water for 10 to 15 minutes:

1. Perform toe curls with a washcloth. Lay a washcloth in the bottom of your pan of warm water and grasp it with your toes. Try to draw the washcloth up into a ball under your foot.
2. Do these toe stretches for 10 seconds each time and repeat frequently while in the water. Place the foot flat on the bottom of the pan of water and raise the heel until you feel tightness on the bottom of your foot. This tightness is the plantar fascia being pulled and this means you are stretching it.
3. Roll your foot over a cylinder such as a soup can, tomato paste can or a golf ball while in the water. This gradual rolling and massaging action will also help stretch the plantar ligament.

After performing the exercises for 10 to 15 minutes, dry your foot thoroughly and rub your heel with ice in a zip-lock bag for five minutes. Alternating between heat and ice is a great way to help reduce the inflammation in your heel.

It is very important that you do these exercises 4 to 5 times every day. If you cannot get to the water and ice, at least do the exercises. You can do these under the table while you eat, under your desk at work, or in the car.

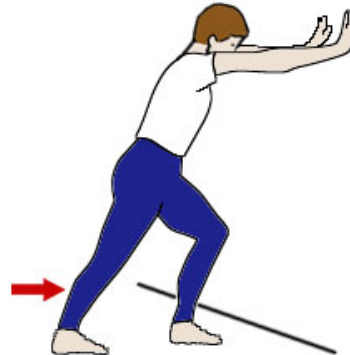
Stretching Exercises for the Posterior Muscle Group “Runners Stretches”

Lean up against a wall, arms length away with both hands on the wall at shoulder height. Place one foot in front of the other with your feet separated about one foot apart.

Three very important things to remember:

1. Your toes should point slightly inward
2. Your back heel stays on the ground
3. Your back leg stays straight and your front one bends

Lean forward but do not bend at the waist. You should feel a gentle stretch in the back of your leg. Stretch to the point of feeling it get tight but no to the point of pain. Hold this position for a count of ten. Do each leg three times, and do this exercise 4 to 5 times each day.



An alternative to this stretch is to place a 2"x4" piece of wood in front of your bathroom and kitchen sinks. Every time you get in front of these sinks, place your toes on the block of wood allowing your heels to drop. Stand there for 10 seconds making certain your hips stay directly below your shoulders. Step down and rest. Repeat 3 to 4 times.