



Plantar Fasciitis means inflammation of the plantar fascia, a strong band of tissue that stretches from the heel to the middle bones of the foot. It is quite common and mainly affects people over 40. It is more common in women than men.

### **What causes it?**

Lots of walking, running standing etc; poor cushioned shoes; sudden gains in weight or being overweight causes extra strain on the heel; overuse or sudden stretching of the soles or tightness in the Achilles tendon.

### **What does it feel like?**

There is pain on the bottom of the heel, which generally radiates down the inside of the sole of the foot. It usually increases over a period of months. It tends to be worse on activity and typically first thing in the morning when you take the first steps of the day.

### **What can be done?**

There are a number of treatment options available:

- Exercises shown opposite done twice a day will help to stretch and relax the plantar fascia.
- A heel raise may be of benefit to you to help decrease the tightness in the plantar fascia. (available from larger pharmacist)
- Avoid walking around barefoot as this can put undue stress and strain on the plantar fascia.
- Therapists may advise exercises, deep massage and sometimes ultrasound or acupuncture.
- In some cases a steroid injection may be given.
- Orthotic devices
- Strapping around the heel & arch can also help.

Useful website: [www.heelfixkit.com](http://www.heelfixkit.com)

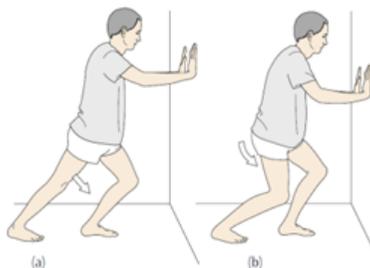
### **1. Achilles tendon and plantar fascia stretch**

First thing in the morning, loop a towel or a piece of elastic around the ball of your foot and keeping your knee straight, pull your toes towards your nose, holding for 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times for each foot.



### **2. Wall push-ups or stretches for Achilles tendon**

The Achilles tendon comes from the muscles at the back of your calf. These exercises need to be performed first with the knee straight and then with the knee bent in order to stretch both parts of the Achilles tendon. Twice a day do the following wall push-ups or stretches: (a) Face the wall, put both hands on the wall at shoulder height, and stagger the feet (one foot in front of the other). The front foot should be approximately 30cm (12 inches) from the wall. With the front knee bent and the back knee straight, lean into the stretch (i.e. towards the wall) until a tightening is felt in the calf of the back leg, and then ease off. Repeat 10 times. (b) Now repeat this exercise but bring the back foot forward a little so that the back knee is slightly bent. Repeat the push-ups 10 times.



### **3. Stair stretches for Achilles tendon & plantar fascia**

Holding the stair-rail for support, with legs slightly apart, position the feet so that both heels are off the end of the step. Lower the heels, keeping the knees straight, until a tightening is felt in the calf. Hold this position for 20-60 seconds and then raise the heels back to neutral. Repeat 6 times, at least twice a day.



### **4. Dynamic stretches for plantar fascia**

This involves rolling the arch of the foot over a rolling pin, a drinks can or a tennis ball etc, while either standing (holding the back of a chair for support or sitting). Allow the foot and ankle to move in all directions over the object. This can be done for a few minutes until there is some discomfort. Repeat this exercise at least twice a day. The discomfort can be relieved by rolling the foot on a cool drinks can from the fridge.

