

## Heel Pain

Plantar fasciosis is the most common cause of proximal plantar heel pain, affecting 10% of the population, and it accounts for approximately 15% of all foot-related complaints. It is characterized by pain and palpatory tenderness on the inside of the heel where it originates from, in addition to pain along the arch of the foot. The pain, which develops gradually over time, is typically worse in the morning for the first few minutes of weight-bearing, and at the end of the day or after prolonged periods of standing, walking or physical activity. Research has identified several factors thought to be associated with plantar fasciosis, the chief amongst them being feet that are either very flat or have a high arch, and tightness in the calf muscles.

The “itis” in plantar fasciitis has been replaced by an “osis” when scientists were unable to identify an inflammatory process in the fascia, and therefore conventional methods of treatment that centre around reducing inflammation (non-steroidal and steroidal anti-inflammatories) are largely ineffective. The first priority is to reduce or remove any of the aforementioned biomechanical faults, which will serve to affect this condition at the root cause. Scientific research also recommends the use of custom prescription orthotics, as well as soft-tissue therapies aimed at releasing tension in the musculature of the posterior leg. For more stubborn cases, there is evidence for the use of night-splints, low level laser therapy, and extra-corporeal shockwave treatments. The latter two therapies remain somewhat controversial, although certainly promising.