



Hands on Physical Therapy Advanced Massage Therapy Newsletter

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The HOPT Wellness Series

Plantar Fasciitis-More Than a Pain in the Foot

Have you ever had severe heel pain or painful arches? Have you ever had trouble putting your weight through your foot first thing in the morning? More than likely you or someone you know has experienced plantar fasciitis.

Plantar fasciitis means pain or inflammation on the bottom of the foot. The plantar fascia is the band of tissue that connects your toes to your heel. Consequently, when this area is strained, weakness, swelling or inflammation occurs which then presents as heel or arch pain. For most people, the worst time of day is taking those first few steps out of bed in the morning or after sitting for a prolonged period of time. Prolonged standing or climbing stairs can also produce pain in the foot or arch.



What causes heel or arch pain to happen? There are several things that can strain this tissue:

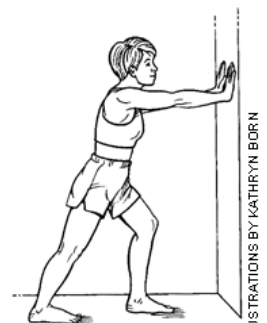
- Poor shoes/footwear is one example. Yes, those cute flip flops that have absolutely no arch support can cause a lot of pain. Maybe your running shoes are worn out. It is recommended that you get a new pair every six months if you run regularly. Maybe you have a pair of shoes that just don't fit you very well.
- High arches/ flat feet or a rigid forefoot are also factors that could lead to plantar fasciitis. Again, good footwear is essential.
- Being over weight causes undue stress through the arch of your foot. It is your basis for support.
- Poor hip alignment can lead to poor knee alignment which can cause you to improperly distribute your weight through your foot. You know the old saying, "The leg bone

is connected to the knee bone. The knee bone is connected to the ankle bone, etc." So, realigning your hips or pelvis can change the stress through the rest of your leg. Fascial tightening in the body can also cause the body to not be aligned properly and thus cause undue pressure/ stress through the leg and foot. At *Hands on Physical Therapy*, our manual therapy, whole body approach stresses finding the cause for your symptoms. Address the problem...decrease the strain for a better long term effect.

Now that we have established what can cause this pain, what can be done about it? A proper evaluation will target the areas causing undo stress and plantar fasciitis symptoms. In addition to correction of muscular imbalances, the standard home treatment is ice, anti-inflammatories (Advil/Motrin, Aleve), custom arch supports or new shoes with good arch supports and stretching. Sometimes a night boot is recommended that will keep the foot in a flexed or stretched position throughout the night. Other times the foot can be taped to help support the strained fascia.

Some specific stretches that are helpful follow:

- Gastrocnemius/soleus (calf muscle) stretches- Loop a towel or belt around the ball of your foot and gently pull towards you. When you first feel a stretch, stop and hold it for at least 90 seconds. This can be done in sitting or lying down. Try it with your knee straight and then with it bent. You can also stand in front of a wall and put one foot in front of you and one behind you. Bend the front leg and lean into the wall while keeping the heel of the back leg on the floor. You should feel a mild stretch in your calf. Then, slightly bend the back knee



ILLUSTRATIONS BY KATHRYN BORN



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- Forefoot/arch stretches- sit or stand with a tennis ball or golf ball under the arch of your foot. Push foot slowly into ball until mild stretch is felt. Hold 90 seconds.
- Anterior tibialis stretch- sit in a chair and put your foot under your chair with your toes/toenails against the floor. Hold 90 seconds.
- Other stretches which are not as direct but are often related to this problem are as follows:
 - Psoas release- lie on your stomach on the floor and place the 4" yellow ball between the belly button and the hip bone. Hold for 90 seconds. Do both sides.
 - Quad release- lie on your stomach on the floor. Place either the 4" yellow ball or a tennis ball under your thigh. Hold for 90 seconds.

Hamstring release- sit with your legs out in front of you. Place the ball under your hamstring (back part of your upper leg). Hold for 90 seconds.

In addition to the above stretches, walking in water and cushioned surfaces such as a running track will decrease the stress through the arch of your foot.

Overall general health is the best way to prevent pain. Drink plenty of water. That means approximately 64 oz. a day. If you are outside a lot during the day, you will need to drink more. Also, eat a well balanced diet. Raw fruits and vegetables are essential to good health. Finally, exercise/stretch every day. Even if you only have time for a few minutes, they count. Put yourself and your health first. You will feel better and you will set a great example for others.

Don't hesitate to ask any therapist at *Hands on Physical Therapy* if you have specific questions or concerns about plantar fasciitis. The staff at HOPT is here to help you better understand the nature of your injury and what you can do to eliminate your pain.

Danica Sims, PT

Staff News:

We are proud to introduce our newest office team members:

Linda Lopez- **Front Office Manager**. Linda joined our staff in August. Linda came here from The South Austin Rehab & Wound Clinic. She enjoys working with the pub-

lic and is here to answer any questions you might have. She is a proud mom of two wonderful girls and a very proud grandma of her first and only grandson. Linda's boyfriend, Amer, has been a great inspiration and support system in her life. Linda will be the friendly and smiley person you'll see when you walk in the door.

Ashley Pettipiece- **Patient Representative/ Office Aide**

Ashley joined us this July. She is a home-grown Round Rock girl and currently enrolled in Austin School of Massage. Being here at Hands on Physical Therapy is giving Ashley skills and knowledge to help her with her future profession as a Massage Therapist. When Ashley is not working here at our clinic or studying in school, you might commonly find her at any of Austin's favorite "Bouldering" spots challenging her climbing skills.



WHAT IS A PATIENT REPRESENTATIVE?

We added this position to provide additional support to you.....our clients. Since Hands on Physical Therapy has grown, we want to be sure that we are still providing you with the same quality of service that we always have. It can be a challenge with more people coming in and out so Ashley is here to help you. Did we mess up your schedule? Did your treatment not go as expected? Tell Ashley. Her job is to coordinate your needs with either the office or the therapists. Since this is a newly created position, it's a work in progress and we would love your input. Please stop Ashley and tell her your concerns.?

HAVE YOU HEARD.....

Plans are in the works for us to move into a bigger space. Our goal for a new space is to provide more service to our clients. We would love a big room where we can do regular workshops. Some possibilities are....monthly workshops for our clients with helpful information in the areas that we love...such as Women's and Men's Health, Spinal Care Class, Wellness classes, Yoga.

We will keep you posted on our progress. In the meanwhile, give us suggestions of things that you would love to see.

Be Part of our last Sedona Intensive for 2006

"Maybe it's time for you to really put yourself on top!"



Join us in Sedona, Arizona and see things from a different perspective. Our Intensive Therapeutic Retreat dates are: October 6th-10th, 2006.

The ideal surroundings of the Red Rocks and Oak Creek Canyon help to foster an environment of relaxation and inner awareness.



Please contact Tammy if you would like to sign up today or need additional information.

ADVANCED MASSAGE THERAPY



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Massages that are available include, but are not limited to, Myofascial Release, Hot Stone, Cranio-Sacral, Swedish and Deep Tissue.

Call today for a gift certificate!!



Love the treatment here at HOPT? Well, now you can learn self help techniques to take home with you! Kristi McGrath, PT, teaches a variety of self treatments such as restorative stretching and body awareness. These techniques will increase your mobility and flexibility and decrease your pain.

Sign up and make your body happy today! Our classes for September and October 2006 are:

September 6 @ 4:00-5:00pm

September 22 @ 12:45-1:45pm

October 10 @ 5:00-6:00pm

October 26 @ 12:30-1:30pm

Hands on Physical Therapy/ Advanced Massage Therapy

301 Hester's Crossing #160
Round Rock, TX 78681

Phone: 512 310-1928

Fax: 512 310-9180

Email: handsonptrr@earthlink.net

Website: handsonpt.net