

ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL HEALTHSOURCE

Heel Pain Is Common and Treatable

Heel pain is one of the most common forms of foot pain in adults. It is often a direct result of daily activities and exercise. The heel bone is the largest bone in the foot and is the first part of the foot to contact the ground during walking or other activities.

Heel pain most often is a result of problems with the plantar fascia, a band of fibrous connective tissue in the foot. Inflammation of this structure is plantar fasciitis and most often flairs up after a period of rest, such as when you awake in the morning. The pain may then subside with activity and increase in severity after prolonged activity.

Heel pain is most common in active people over the age of 40. It is also relatively common in active children between the ages of eight and 13. Other risk factors include obesity, standing for prolonged periods, and wearing improperly fitted shoes.

In addition to plantar fasciitis, other causes for heel pain include Achilles tendonitis, bone bruises, heel spurs, and stress fractures.

To reduce the risk for heel pain, make sure your shoes fit properly. It is also very important to warm up before exercising. There are some specific exercises that may help prevent heel pain, including stretching the plantar fascia and calf, and leg muscle strengthening. If you currently walk or run a lot, cut back a little. If you have either flat feet or a very high arch, ask your doctor about getting orthotics, or arch supports, which a professional will need to fit. Losing weight can help lessen your heel pain as well. In addition, if your job involves standing in one spot for long periods, place some type of padding on the floor

Over the counter pain relievers like aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen can help relieve the pain. Ask your doctor what is best for you. If heel pain persists despite stretching, arch supports, and medication, talk to your doctor about other treatments.



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