

# Plantar Fasciitis



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## Plantar Fasciitis is the Most Common Foot Condition Treated

Foot pain can affect a wide variety of patients from a marathon runner who pounds the pavement to the industrial laborer or beauty shop stylist who is required to be on their feet all day. According to the Journal of Orthopaedic and Sports Physical Therapy, plantar fasciitis is the most common foot condition treated by health care providers. It is estimated that plantar fasciitis pains approximately two million Americans each year and affects as much as 10% of the population over the course of a lifetime.

Plantar fasciitis is an inflammation of the plantar fascial tissue. The plantar fascia is made up of three bands of tissue that start on the plantar surface of the calcaneus and travel forward to the toes. Most patients complain of heel pain that starts at the attachment site of the plantar fascia on the calcaneus.

### Risk Factors

Risk factors for plantar fasciitis increase as ankle dorsiflexion range of motion decreases. Other factors include spending the majority of the workday on their feet, and a body mass index of greater than 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup>.

### Diagnosis

Patients typically report an insidious onset of pain under the plantar surface of the heel upon weight bearing after a period of non-weight bearing. The pain is most noticeable in the morning with the first steps after waking or after a period of inactivity. In some cases, the pain is so severe that it results in an antalgic gait. The patient will usually report that the heel pain lessens with increased levels of activity such as walking or running, but will tend to worsen toward the end of the day. The history usually indicates that there has been a recent change in activity level, such as increased walking/running distance or an employment change that requires more time standing or walking. In most cases, the patient will initially complain of sharp, localized pain under the anteromedial aspect of the plantar surface of the heel\*.

\*Journal of Orthopaedic and Sports Physical Therapy, Volume 38, Number 4: April 2008

## LOPT participates in all major insurance programs

## Interventions

Because of its chronic nature, plantar fasciitis can be a frustrating diagnosis. Fortunately, the physical therapists at LOPT offer your patients reliable treatment through several intervention options.

### Manual Therapy

ASTYM, which stands for Augmented Soft Tissue Mobilization, is a recent treatment protocol that LOPT has used successfully to treat patients. ASTYM remodels chronic scar tissue by inducing microtrauma to the affected area. Patients remain active during treatment, as new tissue regenerates in functional patterns. According to [www.ASTYM.com](http://www.ASTYM.com), recent studies indicate an 89.1% improvement in plantar fascial heel pain with an average of only nine visits.

### Modalities

Dexamethasone delivered by iontophoresis can be used to provide short-term pain relief. This treatment option is most effective for immediate reduction in symptoms. However, this may not be effective for long-term relief.

### Stretching

Calf muscle and plantar fascial stretching can be used to provide improvements in flexibility. As a reduction in ankle dorsiflexion range of motion is a major risk factor for plantar fasciitis, stretching is an important factor in long-term pain reduction.

### Orthotic Devices and Night Splints

Prefabricated or custom orthotics can be used to provide short-term reduction of pain and improve range of motion. Night splints to improve range of motion should be considered for patients who have experienced pain for longer than six months.

### Taping Techniques

Recent studies have indicated that low-dye taping can reduce stress to the plantar fascia to help provide pain relief.

**We teach patients the skills needed to manage their pain and limitations. As the referring physician, you will receive regular communications updating the progress of your patient's status, goals and evaluations.**

**To Make a Referral Call 420-2626**

Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.