

# Plantar fasciitis Exercises

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## What is Plantar fasciitis?

Plantar fasciitis is a common condition that causes pain in the heel and plantar surface of the foot. It usually occurs when the thick plantar fascia band connecting your heel bone to the toes become inflamed due to overuse, tightness of calf muscles and the Achilles tendon, an increase in weight, foot problems such as flat feet, high arches or any other abnormalities and unsupportive footwear.

Occurrence is high among age 40 to 60 years, occupations that require long standing, runners and dancers. Common symptoms include heel pain that is worsened with activities.

A well-rounded home exercise programme will help relieve your pain; these exercises should focus on stretching, strengthening and improving the flexibility of the foot and lower leg muscles. Here is a basic programme you can follow:

### Stretching Exercises

**Calf Stretch (Gastrocnemius Stretch):** Stand facing a wall with your hands placed on the wall at shoulder height. Place one foot behind the other, keeping the back leg straight and the front leg slightly bent. Lean forward until you feel a stretch in the calf of your back leg.

Hold for 20 to 30 seconds, Repeat 3 times



**Soleus Stretch:** This is similar to the calf stretch, but with the back knee slightly bent. This targets the deeper soleus muscle.

Hold for 20 to 30 seconds, Repeat 3 times



**Plantar Fascia Stretch:** Sit on a chair and cross one leg over the other. Hold your toes and gently pull them back toward your shin until you feel a stretch in the arch of your foot.

Hold for 20 to 30 seconds, Repeat 3 times



**Towel Stretch:** Sit on the floor with your legs stretched out in front of you. Loop a towel around the ball of one foot and gently pull the towel towards you, keeping your knee straight. This stretches the plantar fascia and the Achilles tendon.

Hold for 20 to 30 seconds, Repeat 3 times



## **Strengthening Exercises**

**Towel Scrunches:** Sit in a chair and place a small towel flat on the floor in front of you. Use your toes to scrunch the towel toward you.

Sets: 2 to 3 sets, Repeat: 10 to 15 times



**Marble Pickups:** Place a few marbles or small objects on the floor. Using your toes, pick up each object and place it into a bowl.

Sets: 2 to 3 sets, Repeat: 10 to 15 times



**Arch Lifts:** Stand barefoot on a flat surface. Try to lift the arch of your foot while keeping your toes and heel on the ground. This exercise strengthens the muscles that support the arch.

Sets: 2 to 3 sets, Repeat: 10 to 15 times



**Calf Raises:** Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Slowly lift your heels off the ground, balancing on your toes, then slowly lower your heels back down. You can hold onto a wall or chair for balance.

Sets: 2 to 3 sets, Repeat: 10 to 15 times



## **Flexibility and Mobility**

**Rolling:** Roll your foot over a tennis ball, or foam roller, applying gentle pressure to the plantar fascia. This can help reduce tension and inflammation.

**Duration:** 1 to 2 minutes



**Ankle Circles:** Sit or stand with your leg extended. Slowly rotate your ankle in large circles, first clockwise, then counter clockwise.

**Repeat:** 10 circles in each direction, **Sets:** 2 to 3 sets



## Functional Exercises

**Toe Walking:** Walk on your toes for short distances (e.g. 10 to 20 steps). This strengthens the intrinsic muscles of the foot and helps improve balance.

Repeat: Walk back and forth 3 to 5 times



**Heel Walking:** Walk on your heels for short distances. This strengthens the muscles in the front of the shin and stretches the calf muscles.

Repeat: Walk back and forth 3 to 5 times



## Advice for recovery

- **Consistency:** Do these exercises daily, especially the stretches and rolling
- **Progression:** Start slowly and gradually increase intensity as your pain decreases
- **Footwear:** Wear supportive shoes throughout the day, especially if you are standing or walking a lot
- **Rest:** Avoid activities that aggravate the pain, such as running or jumping, until your symptoms improve

## If it doesn't improve

Plantar fasciitis typically improves with exercises but in some cases, the condition can become chronic and may require more intensive intervention, so if your pain persists or increases with the exercises, it is advisable to speak with your physiotherapist/GP/consultant.

### **Physiotherapy Departments**

County Hospital Louth: 01507 631234

Grantham District Hospital: 01476 464253

Lincoln County Hospital: 01522 573945

Pilgrim Hospital Boston: 01205 445494

Johnson Community Hospital Spalding: 01775 652204

Skegness and District Hospital: 01754 613516

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