

OH, MY ACHING FEET!

Are you experiencing pain on the bottom of your foot? Do you wake up in the morning, feet hit the floor and it feels like your walking on hot coals or broken glass and you just hope you can make it to the bathroom? Or, does your pain increase with activity or standing on your feet all day? If so, you are likely suffering from Plantar Fasciitis (PF).

WHAT IS PLANTAR FASCITIS

PF is one of the most common foot ailments (very common in runners) and is associated with irritation of the plantar fascia (a thick ligament like tissue that runs from the ball of your foot along the arch and inserts into the heel bone, Calcaneus) and surrounding muscles of the foot. It usually begins as a tenderness or mild pain on the bottom of your foot near your arch or heel. Gradually it becomes more severe and may localize to a spot under your heel that feels like a bone bruise or feels like you are stepping on a pebble. Pain on the bottom of the foot is usually worse in the morning, but may feel better as it warms up during the day. The main cause of plantar fasciitis is improper foot bio-mechanics. Some other causes or aggravating factors of plantar fasciitis include foot trauma, loss of the normal foot arch, repetitive standing, running, or walking on hard surfaces, and abnormal foot motion (excessive pronation) which strains the plantar fascia mostly at the heel.

TREATMENT

The medical approach to treating plantar fasciitis is usually treating with NSAIDS (anti-inflammatories) or cortisone injection. Cortisone injection may help to reduce the pain and inflammation, but is necessary in less than 25% of the cases and does not address the bio-mechanical problems occurring with the foot and the pain is more than likely to return without correcting those problems.

The Chiropractic approach is a multi-treatment approach and is aimed at decreasing inflammation, improving blood flow to the affected area and improving foot bio-mechanics and strengthening. Some of the preferred treatment methods may include; chiropractic manipulation to the joints of the foot to increase mobility and break up adhesions, deep tissue muscle release techniques, laser, ultrasound, electrical muscle stimulation, taping and acupuncture to increase blood flow, decrease inflammation and increase flexibility in the affected muscles. Many Chiropractors will recommend custom orthotics (specialized molded or cast shoe inserts) to support your arch and reduce the strain on the sole of the foot. You will be required to perform specific exercises for stretching and strengthening the surrounding muscles and tissue. Also, a “night splint”, worn while you sleep, is usually recommended which passively stretches the plantar fascia and calf muscle and will minimize stress on the inflamed area. Remember, proper healing can take anywhere from 6 to 14 weeks. Be a patient, patient. I usually see positive results within 3 to 12 visits and success rate is over 90%. See your Chiropractor for regular adjustments and continue on the natural road to wellness.

Visit my website DRBRIDGECHIROPRACTIC.COM for more specifics on the exercises for plantar fasciitis.

Dr. Larry Bridge is a resident of Stanly County and practices at Montgomery County Chiropractic Center, with offices in Albemarle and Troy. He is also board certified in Acupuncture. He can be reached at (704)982-2102 or visit his website for more info at: www.drbridgechiropractic.com.