

## Treating plantar fasciitis with low level laser therapy



By Dava Stewart

The plantar ligament is a thick band of tissue that runs from the heel, along the bottom of the foot, to all five toes, and it is responsible for absorbing a great deal of shock when a person walks or runs. Approximately 80 percent of all reported foot pain in the U.S. is due to some sort of damage to, and inflammation of, that ligament — a condition referred to as plantar fasciitis.<sup>1</sup> Any kind of unusual pressure or wear and tear on the foot may lead to an increased risk of developing the painful condition.

People from all walks of life may develop plantar fasciitis, although the condition is most often seen in patients who are 40-70 years old. In fact, about 10 percent of the population will develop chronic plantar fasciitis.<sup>2,3</sup> Runners, people who stand at work, and those who are overweight have greater risk than the general population.

Traditional treatments of plantar fasciitis include stretching, massage, icing, anti-inflammatory medications, steroid shots, wearing a boot at night to stretch the plantar ligament, and surgery.

Low level laser therapy (LLLT) is quickly becoming a more attractive treatment option for plantar fasciitis. LLLT has long been approved and effectively used to treat inflammation, and there is evidence to suggest that LLLT promotes healing of the small tears in the ligament that cause the inflammation.<sup>4</sup>

Most of the current studies were performed on small populations, so more research is warranted. However, the studies that have been conducted regarding the effectiveness of LLLT as a treatment for plantar fasciitis have shown positive results.<sup>1,5,6</sup>

LLLT is still considered an experimental therapy by many insurance companies, but scientists continue to study its effectiveness, there have been no negative results associated with the therapy. Treating patients who suffer from plantar fasciitis with LLLT provides another avenue for DCs to help patients who are in pain.

### Sources:

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