

THREE BEST STRETCHES FOR PLANTAR FASCIITIS

➞ Calf stretch



Facing a wall, put your hands against the wall at about eye level. Keep the injured leg on the floor. Turn the injured foot slightly inward (as if pigeon-toed) and slowly

lean into the wall until a stretch is felt in the back of the calf. Hold for 30-60 seconds. Repeat three times. When able to stand comfortable on the injured foot, begin stretching the plantar fascia at the bottom of the foot.

➞ Plantar fascia stair stretch



Stand with the ball of the injured foot on a stair. Reach for the stair below with the feet until a stretch is felt in the arch of the foot. Hold this position for 30-60

seconds and then relax. Repeat three times.

➞ Towel Stretch



Sit on a hard surface with the injured leg stretched out front. Loop a towel around the ball of the foot and pull the towel toward the body, stretching the

back of the calf muscle. Hold this position for 30 seconds. Repeat three times. When the towel stretch becomes too easy, begin doing the standing calf stretch.



ORTHOTICS & FOOT STRENGTH

A study several years ago looked at how the use of orthotics affected arch strength. This study found that in persons with flat feet, the use of orthotics in combination with arch strengthening exercises resulted in stronger feet than when using the exercises alone.

Orthotics position the muscles in the arch to function with greater strength and efficiency. Without orthotics, weak muscles in the arch lose the mechanical advantage to support the foot.

Which one is best at strengthening the arch, custom orthotics or over-the-counter arch supports?

Over-the-counter arch supports will benefit many people. A custom orthotic is the best option for feet that have unique biomechanics or a foot deformity. The better the alignment of the foot, the better the muscle function, and the less pain one will experience. Ask your doctor if custom orthotics are what you need for complete and long-lasting relief of your foot pain.

Heel Pain 101

Heel pain, often caused by plantar fasciitis, affects over a million Americans every year. Learn how our podiatrists treat it with our Heel Pain 101 guide.



WHAT IS PLANTAR FASCIITIS?

Plantar fasciitis is an inflammation of the band of tissue (the plantar fascia) that extends from the heel to the toes. In this condition, the fascia first becomes irritated and then inflamed - resulting in heel pain. The symptoms of plantar fasciitis are:

- Pain on the bottom of the heel
- Pain that is usually worse upon arising from rest
- Pain that increase over a period of weeks or months

People with plantar fasciitis often describe the pain as worse when they get up in the morning or after they've been sitting for long periods of time.

After a few minutes of walking, the pain decreases because walking stretches the fascia. For some people, the pain subsides but returns after spending long periods of time on their feet.

CAUSES OF PLANTAR FASCIITIS

Most causes of plantar fasciitis relate to faulty structure of the foot. People with flat feet or high arches are more prone to developing this condition.

Wearing shoes lacking support and barefoot walking on hard, flat surfaces puts strain on the fascia, which can lead to pain in the heel. Standing for long periods of time or being overweight greatly increases the risk of developing plantar fasciitis.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Serious cases of plantar fasciitis can only be treated with a comprehensive treatment plan involving your podiatrist.

In addition to simple physical therapies that include icing and stretching, effective treatments include:

- **Arch-supports or custom orthotics.** These devices fit into your shoe and help correct the structural abnormalities in the foot.

- **Night splint.** A night splint stretches the plantar fascia while sleeping, reducing the likelihood of common morning pain.

- **Injection therapy.** Corticosteroid injections can help reduce inflammation and provide immediate pain relief.

- **Shockwave therapy.** Painless electromagnetic pulses stimulate affected tissue, repairing and relieving causes of the heel pain.

DID YOU KNOW?

80% of patients with plantar fasciitis are diagnosed again within one year. Proper diagnosis and treatments are essential for recovery.

- **ORTHOPAEDIC JOURNAL OF SPORTS MEDICINE**



ARCH SUPPORTS VS ORTHOTICS

LEARN THE DIFFERENCES AND DISCOVER
WHICH ONE IS RIGHT FOR YOU.



► Arch Supports

Arch supports from the local pharmacy are made of foams that adds a layer of cushion in your shoe. The added comfort is immediate, but likely short-lived. Within several weeks, the foam wears away and the underlying cause of the foot pain remains.

Premium arch supports should not cost more than \$50-\$75. These higher quality arch supports help improve the overall function of your feet. The over-the-counter insoles at Neuhaus Foot & Ankle are medical grade, providing effective pain relief that should last 6-12 months.

► Orthotics

Custom orthotics are specially-made devices designed to support and comfort your feet. Prescription orthotics are made for you and no one else. They match the contours of your feet precisely and are designed for the way you move, making activities such as running, walking – even standing – more efficient and much less painful.

By redistributing pressure on the bottom of the foot with the highest medical grade materials, orthotics provide effective relief and ongoing support for 3-5 years or more.

► Consider Your Needs

Podiatrists use orthotics to treat foot problems such as plantar fasciitis, bursitis, tendinitis, diabetic foot conditions, bunions, neuromas, and foot, ankle, and heel pain. Clinical research studies have shown that podiatrist-prescribed foot orthotics decrease foot pain and improve function.

If you are simply looking for extra cushioning, you may wish to try an insole first. However, these will do little to treat chronic foot pain and discomfort. Are you planning to run a marathon, or do you just need a little arch support in your work shoes?

Consider your health. Do you have diabetes? Problems with circulation? Diabetes and poor circulation increase your risk of foot ulcers and infections, you may be better suited for custom orthotics or prescription diabetic shoes. Your podiatrist can help you make the right choice.



► Getting Custom Orthotics

Orthotics should only be prescribed following a thorough examination with your podiatrist. There can be major differences between your left and right foot, so an impression of each foot is taken and analyzed to ensure the best fit. Within 2-4 weeks, your handmade, custom orthotics are delivered to our office. You'll meet with an orthotic specialist for a final fitting and learn how to make the most of your new orthotics so they provide effective treatment and pain relief for years to come.

