

Focus in on Your Heel Pain: Where Does it Hurt?

A recent survey by the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) showed that nearly 40 percent of Americans have experienced heel pain more than any other foot ailment within the last 12 months.

While you may simply attribute your pain to a “heel spur,” the heel spur is likely not the source of your pain—it is caused by something else.

Generally, the longer you wait to treat heel pain, the harder it is to successfully overcome. However, there is good news—educating yourself about the most common heel pain problems, as well as their treatments, can give you the upper hand on your foot health!



Posterior Tibial Tendinitis

Causes: Overpronation, flat feet, excessive weight, age

Left untreated: It can develop into a more chronic problem involving tendon tearing and tendonosis, which involves internal scar tissue.

Treatments:

Medical: Ice, stretching, custom orthotics, wearing shoes with proper arch support, soft or hard casts, splints, avoiding barefoot walking, non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory medication

Achilles Tendinitis

Causes: Tight calf muscles, bone spurs, age and/or injury, primary tendinitis

Left untreated: It can develop into a more chronic problem that involves the tendon rupturing and tendonosis.

Treatments:

Medical: Heel lifts, stretching, non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory medications, custom orthotics

Plantar Fasciitis

Causes: Overpronation/fallen arches (primary cause), flat feet, excessive weight, overuse and injury; Plantar Fasciitis is the most common cause of heel pain, and often mistaken for heel spurs.

Left untreated: It can develop into a more chronic problem that includes tendon tearing and/or fasciosis, which involves internal scar tissue.

Treatments:

Medical: Ice, stretching, custom orthotics, wearing shoes with a firm heel, avoiding barefoot walking, physical therapy, cortisone shots, night splints

Fat Pad Thinning

Causes: Age (primary cause), obesity, walking on hard surfaces, prolonged standing

Left untreated: It can develop into pain when sitting/standing, ulceration and callus build-up.

Treatments:

Medical: Cushioned insoles, podiatric physician-prescribed supportive shoes with cushioning