



Next Step

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Heel Pain Got You Down?

Heel Pain Doesn't Have to Slow You Down

Heel Pain or *Plantar Fasciitis* is an inflammation of a band of connective tissue that inserts in the bottom of the heel. That connective tissue extends from the heels out to the toes. Initially, this band becomes irritated and then inflamed. Most of our patients tell us that the pain is most severe in the morning with the first steps out of bed and then it seems to loosen up and get a bit better, but later in the day it starts to hurt more again.

Heel Pain can continue for weeks or months but it does get progressively worse.

As the connective tissue (or ligament) continues to keep pulling on the heel bone it becomes overstretched as we bear weight on it. Eventually it develops small micro tears in the plantar fascia which can eventually calcify and lead to a heel spur which is a bony growth on the underside of the heel bone.

Anyone can suffer from Heel Pain

It is most common in people who spend a great deal of time on their feet, especially in their work. The human foot is made to be in motion, but certain jobs affect the health of your feet more frequently than other. Also, people with flat feet, high arches, or excess weight, and people who are very active in sports can experience heel pain as well.

Not all Heel Pain is Plantar Fasciitis

While 90% of heel pain is *Plantar Fasciitis*, not all heel pain is caused by this condition and that is why we need to see you and examine your feet to find out the real cause of the pain you are experiencing. Once we determine the underlying cause of your heel pain, we can recommend many treatment options.

There is simply no reason to continue to suffer from Heel Pain, even if it doesn't hurt all the time.

The natural state of your feet, ankles, and heels is comfortable and healthy. 75,000 miles is a long distance to travel and, just like your automobile, you need to occasionally do some preventative maintenance on your feet. Our feet and ankles are such marvels of engineering that we really don't need to "take them into the shop" as much as we do our cars, but if you are experiencing heel pain, that is the "warning light" going off on the dashboard telling you to get your feet to an expert. Podiatrists are the experts of the human foot and ankle. We are the very first professional to visit at the first sign of heel pain.

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Wintertime Foot Blues

You've bid farewell to those colorful sandals and comfortable flip-flops until next summer. But just because your feet won't be on display does not mean it's time to forget about foot care.

Taking care of your feet is especially important in the winter. "During the winter, our feet are cooped up in heavy socks and shoes and may be extra dry due to the lack of moisture in the air," say the doctors at Connecticut Foot Care Centers.

What's the remedy for dry feet in the winter? Follow this at-home treatment, recommended by your podiatrists and your feet will be winter fabulous.

1. Prepare to pamper.

Remove old nail polish and stimulate foot circulation by propping one foot at a time on your lap, slowly moving your thumbs from the top of your toes to the bottom of your heel and back. Then, cut toenails straight across with a nail clipper and smooth rough edges with an emery board.



2. Soothe your soles.

Soak feet for at least five minutes in a container filled with warm water. Use a pumice stone or foot file to gently smooth the skin around your heels, and the balls and sides of your feet. Pat your feet dry, making sure to dry between each toe and loosen your joints by rotating your foot slowly at the ankle a few times in each direction. Apply emollient-enriched lotion all over your feet to hydrate the skin and increase circulation. Then, gently push back the cuticles with a cuticle pusher or manicure stick.

3. Add the finishing touches.

Using soap and water, remove the moisturizer from your toenails and in-between your toes. Next, if your nails are healthy, feel free to splash on some color with the nail polish of your choice. Before you go to bed, wrap cellophane around your feet. The cellophane will act as a sauna while locking in the moisture. By morning, your feet will be smooth, soft, and ready to go.

4. Consider getting laser nail treatment.

If you have fungal toenails and no topical or oral medication has worked for you, consider getting laser nail treatment. Convenient and quick, the procedure takes less than 20 minutes. By the time sandal season comes along, you should have clear, fungal-free toenails!

Did you know
you'll walk over
75,000 miles in
your lifetime?

February Shoe of the Month: Ballet Flats

We're not fans of the ballet flat here at Connecticut Foot Care Centers, in general, but there are always exceptions. The ultra-feminine ballet slipper may make you feel light on your feet, but in reality, its flat nature can be punishing on the arch and heel. Thin soles provide inadequate cushioning and support, and can result in heel and arch pain. Never choose a pair that can bend in half and don't wear them for a long period of time. Consider a cushioned insert like the Power-Steps we sell here in the office for extra shock absorption. Pictured here are Clark's Poem Court in demin.



Perseverance By Brian Ayers

I've recently been reading a book called *Talent Is Never Enough* by John C. Maxwell. If you haven't read it, I highly recommend it. The book is written in regards to talent in business. However, many of the lessons are applicable to the fitness world as well.

In one of the chapters, Maxwell discusses perseverance in a way that I feel applies to anyone struggling through a rough patch on their road to fitness. "Confronted with adversity, many people give up while others rise up. How do those who succeed do it? They persevere. They find the benefit to them personally that comes with any trial and they recognize that the best thing about adversity is coming out the other side of it." He goes on to point out that "Perseverance doesn't really come into play until you are tired. When you are fresh, excited, and energetic you approach a task with vigor...only when you become tired do you need perseverance. To successful people fatigue and discouragement are not signs to quit. They perceive them as signals to draw on

their reserves, rely on their character, and keep going."

This is one of the hardest things for many people to do when it comes to diet and exercise. Once people decide to make a change, they are generally excited and eager to get started. While that excitement can be enough to initiate positive changes, it's perseverance that will ultimately keep them going. There may come a point where you are being consistent with your exercise and sticking to your nutrition plan but, for one reason or another, your progress plateaus. This is not the time to give up, but rather, it is the time to draw on perseverance. It may simply be time to change up your approach. Once your body has adapted to a certain style of exercise, that style then becomes less effective at facilitating further change. If you are unsure about what changes to make, it may be time to seek the assistance of a personal trainer and/or nutritionist to give you the tools you need to succeed. Giving up should never be an option. In his book, Maxwell goes on

to discuss the idea that the energy that you invest in making these changes is really an investment in yourself. "...perseverance is an investment. It means more than working hard. It is a willingness to bind oneself emotionally, intellectually, physically, and spiritually to an idea or task until it has been completed. Perseverance demands a lot, but here's the good news: everything you give is an investment in yourself."

This does a great job of summing up what it takes to make real, positive, lasting changes in our lives. You will be tested by hardships on your road to fitness and sometimes it may take all the conviction that you possess to make the right decisions, but you can do so with the knowledge that you are making that investment in yourself.

Brian Ayers is the owner of Rugged Fitness, a strength and conditioning gym in Wethersfield. For more information, visit: www.areyourugged.com.

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In My Spare Time...

Dr. Jeffrey S. Kahn has been providing quality foot care to the residents of Central Connecticut for thirty-four years. However, there is something about him that you probably don't know.

Dr. Kahn enjoys racing cars and trucks!

Over the past ten years Dr. Kahn has raced a variety of remote control (R/C) vehicles. The vehicles range in size from 1/16th scale up to his current truck which is 1/8th scale. He even has one buggy that is 1/4 size of a regular vehicle which he hopes to run in the spring.

Racing became a hobby of Dr. Kahn's when his son opened Speedzone Hobbies in Rocky Hill. At that time, Dr. Kahn's son said, "If you are going to help me out in the store you are going to start driving these vehicles and have some fun". According to Dr. Kahn, "It takes several months for an adult to learn the basics of driving these cars and trucks, but with all of the video games on the market today kids pick up the necessary skills without difficulty".

At Speedzone he ran both gas powered trucks and electric touring cars which are similar to NASCAR vehicles on a smaller scale. "The touring cars are the most technical vehicles that I have run", remarks Dr. Kahn.

Dr. Kahn currently races his truck on Friday nights at a new track in Vernon. In the last two years, the hobby has had a resurgence of interest and it fun for both kids and adults. Racers are grouped according to ability levels resulting in a challenge for each racer.

