

## PLANTAR FASCIITIS

Plantar fasciitis is defined as an inflammation of the plantar fascia or plantar aponeurosis. The plantar fascia is a thin band of tissue that runs from the heel to the base of the toes. Plantar fasciitis typically develops over a long period of time. The soft tissues of the foot can be stressed by the following:

- Repetitive motions that stress the muscles of the foot and legs.
- Flat or high arches
- Standing on hard surfaces for long periods of time.
- Shoes that do not provide the proper foot support.
- Poor foot biomechanics i.e. excessive pronation of the foot.
- Muscles imbalances and restrictions in the legs and feet.
- Trauma to the foot.



With these repeated stresses to the foot, the fascia and the surrounding soft tissues of the foot develop small tears. Since people are continually on their feet, the soft tissue has little time to heal properly. The tissues then become inflamed and irritated. The body lays down restrictive scar tissue over the injured and inflamed tissue resulting in a shortening of the plantar fascia and/or aponeurosis. Scar tissue may also bind adjacent tissues together preventing them from moving freely over each other. This may cause further friction and inflammation.

Many people are diagnosed with heel spurs but the spur is rarely the cause of the pain. Spurs are only formed after the aponeurosis becomes inflamed. Over time, excessive tension on the tendons from the shortened tissues will cause a heel spur to form. Heel spurs are a side effect of the problem and do not cause the pain.

Standard medical treatments fail to address the deep soft tissue structures of the foot. One must also take into account other tissue restrictions that cause excessive pronation of the foot such as calf muscles, hamstrings, internal and external hip rotators as well as the other muscles of the foot.

Active Release breaks up these restrictions within the muscles allowing them to move freely upon one another as well as taking the stress off the tendons attached to the muscles. All restrictions must be released in order to resolve the problem.



Orthotics can be a great adjunct and help correct foot mechanics but restrictions in the soft tissue still need to be addressed in order to resolve Plantar Fasciitis.

- Steroid injections should be avoided whenever possible. Research has shown that more than three or four steroid injections in a year can weaken tendons, damage joints, and can cause weight gain, diabetes, osteoporosis, and ulcers.