

HEEL PAIN

A PRIMER

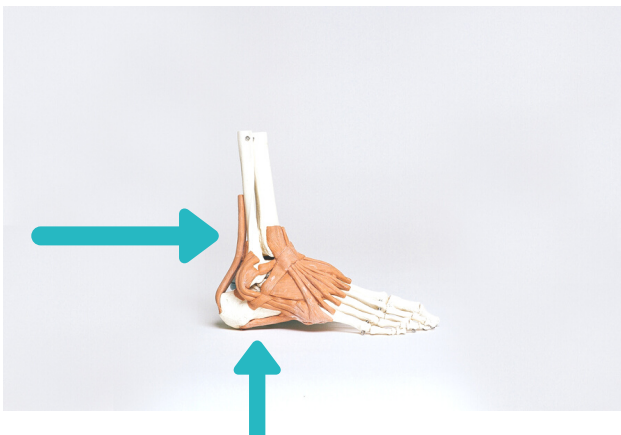
Heel pain can be caused by several conditions, but the 2 most common are Achilles Tendinitis or Plantar Fasciitis. Both can be thought of as overuse disorders of a tendon (technically the plantar fascia is a type of connective tissue called an aponeurosis).

EARLY

The early phase is important. Here, you should listen to your body. Stop doing aggravating activities for a while. In order to walk and go about your normal life, you may want to wear tennis shoes or heel lifts. Talk to your PT about which is appropriate for you. Keep moving your ankle.

ANATOMY

The Achilles Tendon is on the back of your heel. The plantar fascia is the bottom of your foot. Both might hurt early in the morning or when walking, jogging, or standing.



STRUCTURE

Both of these tissues help to absorb shock from the ground and transmit force to the ground via your foot/ankle. The healing process involves creating a thicker region of tissue around the injury and this can hurt in the beginning.

TREATMENT

Exercise and activity modifications are the most important factors in treatment. This may include:

- Exercises to improve pain
- Exercises to improve strength of the tissue and help with healing
- Exercises to improve strength and control of the foot
- Exercises to support your leg via the hip.
- Staying at work and trying to live your usual life with modification is important.

PROGNOSIS

Prognosis is excellent. However, these conditions take longer to heal (3 months or so). It is important not to return to activity too quickly and to build strength in the tissue so it's able to tolerate stress once again. Surgery, injections, etc are very rarely needed.