

# MT. HOOD PODIATRY SEPTEMBER BLOG: HEEL PAIN

The plantar fascia is the largest ligament in the human body, so it's bound to endure pain at least once in our lifetime. Under ordinary circumstances, the plantar fascia acts as a shock-absorber that supports the arch of the foot. If too much tension and stress are put on the ligament, this can result in small tears in the fascia and cause plantar fasciitis.

The sole of the foot is known as the plantar area. Plantar fasciitis is a medical term for when this area becomes inflamed. Plantar fasciitis is usually diagnosed after a physical or foot examination. Plantar Fasciitis can develop alone or it may be a symptom of an underlying condition. Excess weight puts a person at risk for plantar fasciitis. Plantar fasciitis is also common in people between the ages of 40 and 60. Activities that put a lot of pressure on the heel such as running, dancing, or jumping, can also put a patient at risk for plantar fasciitis.

## Symptoms

Pain in the foot arch and/or heel

Stiffness in the plantar area

Tenderness in the sole of the foot

## Nonsurgical Treatment Options

If you are suffering from heel pain, you should try resting and icing the area first. If possible, reduce or cease activities that make the pain worse. Changing the type of shoes you wear may also alleviate pain. Your shoes should always have a strong arch support and well-cushioned soles. If you don't wish to purchase a new pair of shoes, you may want to purchase over-the-counter orthotics or request custom orthotics from a podiatrist.

## When to Visit the Podiatrist

Ignoring plantar fasciitis can result in arch, heel, or overall foot pain that may damper your daily activities. You should call a podiatrist if you are not able to bear weight on your heel when you stand, or if you've sustained an injury to the foot that has caused heel pain. If you've been diagnosed with plantar fasciitis and at-home remedies such as over-the-counter pain medicine, or ice aren't working, call a podiatrist to discuss your treatment options.