

What to do when your heel hurts

Heel pain is the most common foot and ankle problem. Often, a sore heel is not serious. But if you ignore it and keep using the foot, it could get worse.



When it comes to heel pain, the first clue is where the heel hurts. Pain at the bottom of the heel is different from pain behind the heel.



PLANTAR FASCIITIS.

This happens when activity inflames the tissue band that runs along the bottom of the foot. Sometimes, people get plantar fasciitis from wearing shoes that don't properly support their foot. It's often worse when you first get up in the morning. It can usually be resolved with rest, wearing special inserts in the shoes and/or physical therapy.



HEEL SPUR. A heel spur is a buildup of calcium that causes a bony bump on the heel bone. It usually happens if a person has plantar fasciitis for a long time. Treatment is usually similar to plantar fasciitis treatment.



STONE BRUISE. Stepping on a hard object like a stone can injure the bottom of the heel. If you stepped on something recently, try to rest and protect the foot for a few days until it feels better. Wear shoes when you go outside to prevent this from happening in the future.

PAIN UNDERNEATH THE HEEL

PAIN BEHIND THE HEEL



Pain in the back of the heel is usually due to a problem with the Achilles tendon. This tendon connects the heel bone to the calf muscle. Heavy activity or exercise can put too much stress on the tendon too quickly. This can cause Achilles tendinitis, which includes small tears and inflammation in the tendon.

Treatment may include:

- Physical therapy
- Rest
- Ice
- Orthotic(s) (shoe inserts)
- Night splint (device worn at night to protect the foot and tendon)

People who have Achilles tendinitis may need to avoid the activity that caused it, such as running or jumping.

RESPECT YOUR FEET



Many people ignore heel pain, hoping it will go away. But, untreated problems with the foot may only get worse over time without treatment. If your heel pain lasts more than a couple of days, or if you have a health condition like diabetes, see a doctor right away.

Source: American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons