

Heel Pain

What is Heel Pain?

Heel pain is a common problem for many adults. Heel pain often occurs as a result of daily activities and exercise. The heel is designed to support the weight of your body and absorbs the impact when your feet hit the ground during walking and running. During walking the stress placed on the feet can be one-and-a-quarter times your body weight. This increases when you are running.



What causes it?

There are many causes of Heel Pain, such as:

- Achilles Tendonitis
- Heel Spurs
- Inflammatory conditions such as Bursitis, Arthritis and Spondylitis.
- Plantar Fasciitis
- Severs Disease
- Stress fractures

What will happen if I leave it untreated?

Heel pain tends to get worse over time if left untreated. Your gait may alter as you try to avoid placing weight onto the heel. An altered gait can cause problems with the rest of the feet, the knees, the hips and even the back.

What can help?

Due to the number of causes of heel pain it is vital to find out the cause before embarking on any treatment. In the first instance rest can help to relieve your symptoms. You may wish to avoid walking long distances or standing for long periods of time. Putting an ice pack on your heel for 20 minutes several times a day helps to reduce inflammation. Be sure to place a towel between the ice pack and the foot so that the ice is not placed directly onto the foot.

A change to your footwear may be recommended. A shoe that offers support and cushioning would be beneficial for patients with heel pain.

What are the treatment options?

If the heel pain is caused by a biomechanical abnormality, orthotics can be made by your Podiatrist to correct the underlying problem. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as Ibuprofen can be taken if the pain is severe.

Strengthening and stretching exercises may also be prescribed.