



HEEL PAIN





HEEL PAIN

Cause

As podiatrists, heel pain is one of the most common conditions we treat. It can affect one or both heels and is often worse first thing in the morning or after sitting for long periods. The two most common conditions associated with heel pain are plantar fasciitis or heel spurs.

Plantar fasciitis is a painful condition where the ligament that supports the arch of the foot (plantar fascia) becomes inflamed. The plantar fascia is a thick, fibrous ligament that runs under the foot from the heel bone to the toes. It forms the arch of the foot

and functions as our natural shock-absorbing mechanism. Unlike muscle tissue, the plantar fascia is not very elastic and therefore is very limited in its capacity to stretch or elongate. When too much traction is placed on the plantar fascia (for various reasons) micro-tearing will occur, resulting in irritation, inflammation and pain. Plantar Fasciitis usually causes pain under the heel. However some people may experience pain under the arch of the foot. Both heel pain and arch discomfort are related to Plantar Fasciitis, with heel pain being far more common than arch pain.

A **heel spur** refers to bony growth or calcification of a bone that occurs over time. The reason for this is constant pulling and traction of a tendon or ligament to where it attaches to the bone. This often occurs gradually over time and in the context of plantar fasciitis the heel spur is found at the base of the calcaneus where the plantar fascia inserts. The heel spur itself is not painful but rather the inflammation associated with the insertion point of the ligament. Many people will have a heel spur and not suffer any heel pain and it is also possible to have plantar fasciitis with no heel spur.

Causes In dancers we commonly see heel pain occurring for a number of reasons including:

- Walking/dancing barefoot
- Low arch/flat
- feet/over-pronation
- Walking/dancing barefoot
- Low arch/flat
- feet/over-pronation



HEEL PAIN

Treatment

Depending on the severity of your heel pain treatment will usually consist of a combination of the following treatment options. In some cases you may be able to continue with some modified dancing to allow your plantar fascia time to heal.

- Massage
- Strapping
- Ultrasound
- Anti-inflammatories
- Orthotics
- Footwear
- Injection Therapy
- Dry needling

Treatment will usually involve a series of the above methods. A personalised training plan to keep you dancing where possible and allow for conditioning work to continue to get you back to your pre-injured state as soon as possible will also be tailored by our dance podiatrists.

