

Plantar Fasciitis

What is Plantar Fasciitis?

Plantar fasciitis is a common cause of heel pain that affects the thick band of connective tissue which attaches to the heel bone and runs across the bottom of your foot to your toes. This tissue supports the arch of your foot, acting like a shock absorber. When overstressed, fibres which make up the plantar fascia can become disorganized, inflamed and painful which can have a significant impact on weight bearing activities.

Symptoms of Plantar Fasciitis

The symptoms of plantar fasciitis can vary, but they typically include:

- **Heel Pain:** A sharp, stabbing pain in the bottom of your foot near the heel, particularly during the first steps after waking up or after long periods of rest.
 - **Stiffness:** Tightness in the foot, especially in the morning or after prolonged sitting.
 - **Pain after Exercise:** The pain may worsen after exercise or activity, but typically not during it although some symptoms may be present.
 - **Swelling:** Mild swelling around the heel or along the arch of the foot.
-

Causes of Plantar Fasciitis

Several factors can contribute to the development of plantar fasciitis, including:

- **Overuse:** Repetitive stress on the plantar fascia from activities like running, walking, or standing for long periods.
 - **Foot Structure:** Flat feet, high arches, or an abnormal walking pattern can put additional stress on the plantar fascia.
 - **Age:** Plantar fasciitis is more common but not limited to people between the ages of 40 and 60.
 - **Obesity:** Excess weight puts added pressure on the plantar fascia as-well-as increased inflammation due to adipose tissue.
 - **Improper Footwear:** Shoes with poor arch support or thin soles can increase the risk of developing plantar fasciitis.
-

Physiotherapy Treatment for Plantar Fasciitis

At Varney Green Physiotherapy, we offer a range of treatments to help alleviate the pain and address the underlying causes of plantar fasciitis:

- **Stretching Exercises:** Specific exercises designed to stretch the plantar fascia and Achilles tendon, improving flexibility and reducing tension.
- **Strengthening Exercises:** Targeted exercises to strengthen the muscles of the lower leg, foot, and ankle to improve the load tolerance of the fascia.
- **Manual Therapy:** Hands-on techniques to improve foot mobility, reduce tension, and improve healing.
- **Taping:** Taping techniques to support the foot and reduce strain.
- **Education:** Guidance on proper footwear, activity modification, and self-care techniques to prevent recurrence.

Shockwave Therapy for Plantar Fasciitis

Shockwave therapy is a non-invasive treatment option offered at Varney Green Physiotherapy for patients with plantar fasciitis. This therapy uses high-energy sound waves to stimulate healing in the damaged tissue of the plantar fascia.

Benefits of Shockwave Therapy:

- **Pain Relief:** Reduces pain and discomfort associated with plantar fasciitis.
- **Improved Healing:** Enhances blood flow and accelerates tissue repair.
- **Non-Invasive:** No need for surgery or injections, with minimal side effects.

Shockwave therapy can be particularly effective for chronic cases of plantar fasciitis that have not responded to other treatments.

Injections for Plantar Fasciitis

In some cases, when other treatments have not provided sufficient relief, injections may be considered:

- **Corticosteroid Injections:** Anti-inflammatory medication is injected directly into the affected area to reduce inflammation and alleviate pain. However, these injections should be used sparingly due to potential side effects.

Injections are typically considered after other conservative treatments have been tried.