

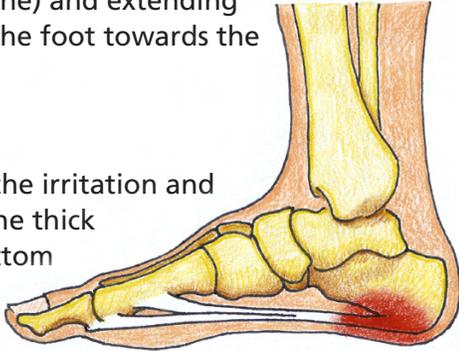
# Your Happy Feet

## Anatomy

The plantar fascia is a thick fibrous band of connective tissue originating on the bottom surface of the calcaneus (heel bone) and extending along the sole of the foot towards the five toes.

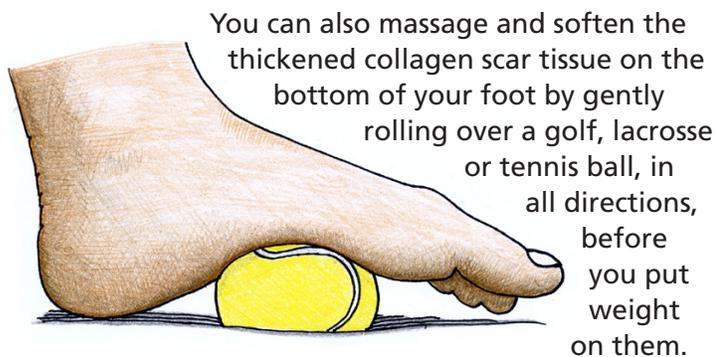
## Pain

Plantar fasciitis is the irritation and inflammation of the thick tendon on the bottom of the foot. The most common complaint is sharp pain on the bottom of the heel, usually with your first steps in the morning. Fibers have knit together all night long during the healing process, with the bottom of your foot in a "pointed" position. These healed areas tear apart when you put your 100-plus pounds of weight on each foot in the morning and flatten down. If this continues day after day, the stiff, matted collagen scar tissue builds up, making healing more difficult.



## Relief

Before getting out of bed in the morning use your knuckles to rub vigorously all over the bottom of your foot. This brings heat, blood, and flexibility into the newly healed fibers. Stretch your toes upward several times to lengthen your tendons and muscles, before standing up.



Getting out of bed, put your feet into slippers or sandals that have a pronounced arch and heel cup. You can put an arch support into your slippers, or use Birkenstock sandals. This prevents the painful tearing of your foot fascia as it flattens on the flat floor under pressure.

**Note:** You will know you are healing well if you feel no pain with these morning steps!

Wear arch supports in your shoes all the time - no bare feet, especially on hard surfaces. Your arch supports should have both a firm arch AND a deep heel cup. This is very important, as the heel cup stabilizes heel striking and pronation (ankles rolling inward) with every step. My favorite brand is SuperFeet Green.



Warm your heels before activity, ice afterwards. Warm with brisk rubbing, a heated rice bag, a pan of hot water, a hot water bottle, or easiest yet: fill a plastic water bottle with hot water, and roll under your foot.

By the end of the day your foot pain may progress to a dull hot ache. Walking or standing for long periods of time, especially in flat soled shoes, aggravates pain. Fill a plastic soda bottle with water (leave a bit of room to allow for expansion) and keep this in your freezer. Roll your bare foot over the frozen bottle for several minutes when it gets sore. Be sure to allow your foot to return to normal temperature before walking on it!

## Kinesio Tape

Tape support into your arches with sports tape or K Tape. Use this along with your shoe inserts to prevent your foot from excessively flattening. There are references online for taping options.



## Avoid

1. Do not run or walk down hills with a long pounding stride. Instead, use a short stride with rapid ankle movement, floating your body over your legs. Think about "Fred Flintstone" with his feet spinning under his car.

*Continued on next page...*

## Brunswick NeuroMuscular Therapy



Deb Merrill, BFA, LMT, CNMT  
Licensed Massage Therapist  
Certified NeuroMuscular Therapist  
153 Park Row, Brunswick, ME 04011  
207-729-6498  
deb@happymuscles.com  
www.happymuscles.com

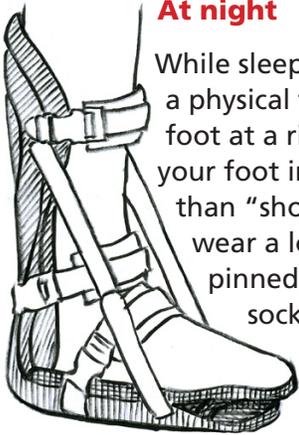


Voted Best Massage Therapy for Mid Coast Maine 2011 & 2012

2. Use ski poles when hiking downhill to absorb shock and become a stable four legged animal.
3. Do not wear any shoes that are flat under your foot. No flip flops, Crocs, high heels, flat dress shoes or soft flexible soles.
4. No walking barefoot in the sand or on hardwood floors, especially first thing in the morning.

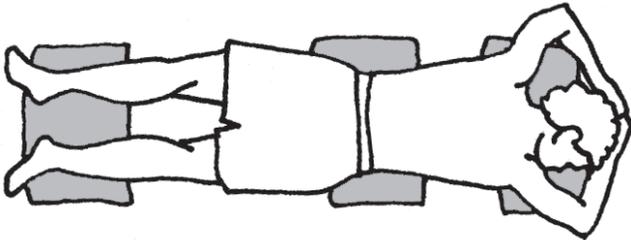
### At night

While sleeping, you can purchase or borrow a physical therapy "boot" to place your foot at a right angle to your leg. This heals your foot into a "long" position, rather than "short" with your toes pointed. Or wear a long knee sock, with the toe pinned securely back to the front of the sock.



Stomach sleepers and women wearing heels have the most difficult time healing from

Plantar Fasciitis because of their pointed toe position, but at night they can use a pillow under their ankles, or hook their toes over the end of the mattress.



### More Ideas

Magnetic shoe inserts help many people. Theoretically, the iron in your blood is attracted to the magnets, which increases circulation in the feet.

Some people find relief by using commercial metatarsal pads that cushion and separate the long metatarsal bones in the feet. These same pads can be placed under your arch area for more support.



Silicone Toe Separators fit easily between the big toe and second toe, helping to avoid bunions.

If you have Morton's Toe (second toe is longer than the big toe) there is a much higher incidence of pronation and associated pain.

Change your shoes half way through the day - this helps many people.

### Strengthen

Don't try to strengthen your feet until the sharp pain has gone away.

1. While standing, hold onto a support and push up on your toes. Repeat until tired.
2. Walk down a flight of stairs backwards allowing your heel to drop off the edge of the stair. Hold carefully to the hand rail.

### Knees

Your knee is the joint sitting right on top of your feet, and will often track poorly if your feet are pronating inward. The first recommendation for knee pain is to get some strong arches under your feet.

### Call me!

Make an appointment for an assessment, cross fiber friction to soften scar tissue, KTape instruction and more ideas for accelerating your healing.

*There are 26 bones in each foot connected by ligaments that loosen up with age, hard use and excess weight.*

