

Script – Broadcast – Living with plantar fasciitis

INTRO

Summer is here, and that means it's time to slip on those flip-flops and other comfortable shoes. But this seasonal wear can cause injuries and foot pain during the hottest time of the year, including plantar fasciitis.

Plantar fasciitis (fashee-EYE-tiss) is one of the most common causes of pain on the bottom of the heel, according to the Journal of Orthopedics and Sports Physical Therapy. Plantar fascia is a strong band of tissue that supports the arch of your foot, says Brittni Zick, a physical therapist with OSF HealthCare.

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Plantar fasciitis is common, especially in people between the ages of 40 to 60. It affects one in 10 people at some point in their life, and roughly two million people seek treatment for the pain and discomfort. It's a frequent problem for athletes, especially runners, but it can happen to anyone. That includes people who have structural foot issues or often wear heels.

Zick says plantar fasciitis can feel like a dull, constant ache or a sharp stabbing pain when you put pressure on your heel.

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Brittni Zick, physical therapist, OSF HealthCare

"Common symptoms are heel pain with the first steps in the morning or after a period of inactivity or if you stand or walk on your feet a lot," she says. (:12)

There are plenty of things you can try at home to relieve discomfort. That includes massaging the bottom of your foot, rolling your foot over a cold-water bottle or wearing arch supports. You can also stretch out the hamstrings.

Zick says if you've been having pain for two weeks, it's probably time to call your provider. But if you've already started a home treatment regiment, give it at least two months. Your provider might refer you to a physical therapist to help improve your range of motion and introduce stretching exercises. Dry needling is another technique used to ease muscle pain and improve the range of motion in the nearby joints. Surgery might also be an option for people when other factors are at play such as bone spurs.

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If you're experiencing any foot pain, don't walk barefoot. Check your shoes for signs of wear and tear and make sure your sandals or flip-flops have arch support. Wearing shoes is important because they unload the compression to the heel. Shoes with thick soles and extra cushioning can also reduce pain while standing and walking.

The best way to manage and prevent plantar fasciitis is stretching, especially before a walk. Zick says before heading out the door, stretch the bottom of your foot, the bottom of your toes and your calf muscles out.

Plantar fasciitis can last anywhere from a few weeks to several months. There is always a chance of recurrence. But by taking preventive 'steps,' Zick says people can get back on their feet sooner rather than later.