

**BIDMC Foot and Ankle Service**  
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**Plantar Fasciitis and Heel Pain**

**What Is Plantar Fasciitis?**

Plantar fasciitis refers to pain, inflammation, and oftentimes degeneration of the plantar fascia. This is a very common cause of heel pain. It very commonly presents as pain under the foot, notably first thing in the morning, or after any prolonged period of rest. It is very hard to pinpoint the exact cause of plantar fasciitis, and it is oftentimes a manifestation of different outside influences (i.e. overuse, improper footwear, etc.). One thing is certain, it can be quite painful!



**How Can I Treat It?**

Treatment of plantar fasciitis usually begins with conservative (non-operative measures). Such measures include use of heel cups (over the counter are fine) or rolling the bottom of the foot out with a tennis ball or frozen water bottle. There are bracing options as well that can help. Only when conservative treatment fails, do we consider operative intervention. One of the most important conservative treatment methods is STRETCHING. The following below are two stretches that are an important step in the recovery process.

*We are committed to helping you recover from injury. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the office at 617-667-3940*

## **Plantar Fasciitis and Heel Pain Home Stretching Program**

### **Achilles Tendon Stretch**

1. Stand facing a wall. Press your palms on the wall and bend the knee unaffected by the heel pain until it is directly over the toes. The leg affected by the heel pain should remain straight
2. Slowly move the straight leg backward until you feel a stretch in your calf. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds.
3. Repeat the exercise for the other leg if both heels hurt.

**Number of stretches/set:** 3-5 x 30 seconds each

**Sets per day:** 3-5



### **Plantar Fascia Stretch**

1. Sit on a chair and cross your leg such that the painful foot rests on the opposite knee.
  2. Then use your hand on the same side as the painful foot to gently pull back your big toe.
  3. With your other hand (while holding the stretch) gently massage the plantar fascia at the base of the heel where you feel the pain.
- \*\*** *Slight discomfort with this is normal, make sure you provide adequate pressure to the plantar fascia*
4. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat.

**Number of stretches/set:** 10 stretches (10 secs each)

**Number of sets per day:** 3-5

You cannot do this stretch too much!



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