

What Is Plantar Fasciitis?

Plantar Fasciitis (fash-e-i-tis) is one of the most common causes of heel pain, accounting for almost 15% of all foot-related complaints (Lutter, 1997), affecting the middle aged (40-50). More women than men are affected by this condition, with about 65% reported to be overweight.

It is understood to be an overuse injury to the plantar fascia and the surrounding structures, which over time cause small tears and inflammation of the tissues. Those with Plantar Fasciitis describe that pain is worse in the morning and after seated rest upon walking, and that pain can be felt in the area shown below in Figure 1.

Plantar Fasciitis has been linked to excessive stress placed on the tissue as a result of athletic activity, muscle weakness or tightness, improper shoes, increase in body weight, aging, inadequate footwear and occupation.



FIGURE 1: Location of pain in the plantar fascia felt by those with Plantar Fasciitis

Ergonomic Risk Factors



FORCE

- Standing on hard surfaces places force on the plantar fascia



REPETITION

- Short cycle time or fast paced work
- Inadequate recovery time
- Sustained or static postures (i.e. standing)



COMBINATION EFFECT

- Many or all of the above risk factors act in synergy to increase the risk of development of Plantar Fasciitis.

Specific Recommendations for Prevention

- Wearing appropriate footwear can help prevent Plantar Fasciitis
- Avoid standing on hard surfaces for extended periods of time
- Exercises designed to improve flexibility in the calf muscles and plantar fascia may reduce the risk of developing Plantar fasciitis

Additional Resources and Tools

[OHCOW Ergo Info Sheet: MSDs](#)

[MSD Prevention Guideline for Ontario](#)

[World Health Organization - Musculoskeletal Health](#)

[Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety](#)

[Foot.com: plantar fasciitis](#)

[Healthlink BC: plantar fasciitis](#)

[OrthoInfo: Plantar fasciitis and bone spurs](#)

For industry/workplace specific recommendations contact an OHCOW Ergonomist to have an assessment performed