

Been ignoring that nagging heel pain that has kept you hobbling all the way to the shower in the morning? Delaying treatment may not be the best idea.

Most heel pain is the result of a severe inflammation of a band of tissue (fascia) running along the bottom (plantar surface) of the foot, from the heel to the ball of the foot. The inflammation of this tissue is called plantar fasciitis.

When the plantar fascia is strained over time beyond its normal extension, the soft tissue fibers of the fascia begin to tear or stretch at points along its length leading to inflammation, pain, and possibly the growth of a bone spur where it attaches to the heel bone. (Spurs are typically NOT the source of most heel pain)

Here are a few suggestions when you start to have heel pain.

1. Stop going barefoot and throw away those bad shoes! (lack of arch support without shock absorption makes this condition worse)
2. Start icing and give yourself a break from your activities
3. Do some stretching in the morning.
4. If icing, stretching and rest don't help, see your foot and ankle specialist for advice
5. Save your money buying cheap over the counter pads and gizmos. Ask your doctor what is best for you.

No matter what your age, when foot discomfort occurs, rapid treatment usually results in complete healing and a return to full function. And, just like a car, with proper maintenance, you'll get many pain-free miles out of your feet.