

PLANTAR FASCIITIS EXERCISES



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You may start strengthening the muscles of your hip and stretching the muscles of your foot right away.

Prone hip extension: Lie on your stomach with your legs straight out behind you. Fold your arms under your head and rest your head on your arms. Draw your belly button in towards your spine and tighten your abdominal muscles. Tighten the buttocks and thigh muscles of the leg on your injured side and lift the leg off the floor about 8 inches. Keep your leg straight. Hold for 5 seconds. Then lower your leg and relax. Do 2 sets of 15.

Side-lying leg lift: Lie on your uninjured side. Tighten the front thigh muscles on your injured leg and lift that leg 8 to 10 inches (20 to 25 centimeters) away from the other leg. Keep the leg straight and lower it slowly. Do 2 sets of 15.

Frozen can roll: Roll your bare injured foot back and forth from your heel to your mid-arch over a frozen juice can. Repeat for 3 to 5 minutes. This exercise is particularly helpful if it is done first thing in the morning.

Towel stretch: Sit on a hard surface with your injured leg stretched out in front of you. Loop a towel around your toes and the ball of your foot and pull the towel toward your body keeping your leg straight. Hold this position for 15 to 30 seconds and then relax. Repeat 3 times.

- **Standing calf stretch:** Stand facing a wall with your hands on the wall at about eye level. Keep your injured leg back with your heel on the floor. Keep the other leg forward with the knee bent. Turn your back foot slightly inward (as if you were pigeon-toed). Slowly lean into the wall until you feel a stretch in the back of your calf. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Return to the starting position. Repeat 3 times. Do this exercise several times each day.
- **Seated plantar fascia stretch:** Sit in a chair and cross the injured foot over the knee of your other leg. Place your fingers over the base of your toes and pull them back toward your shin until you feel a comfortable stretch in the arch of your foot. Hold 15 seconds and repeat 3 times.
- **Plantar fascia massage:** Sit in a chair and cross the injured foot over the knee of your other leg. Place your fingers over the base of the toes of your injured foot and pull your toes toward your shin until you feel a stretch in the arch of your foot. With your other hand, massage the bottom of your foot, moving from the heel toward your toes. Do this for 3 to 5 minutes. Start gently. Press harder on the bottom of your foot as you become able to tolerate more pressure.
- **Achilles stretch:** Stand with the ball of one foot on a stair. Reach for the step below with your heel until you feel a stretch in the arch of your foot. Hold this position for 15 to 30 seconds and then relax. Repeat 3 times.

After you have stretched the bottom muscles of your foot, you can do these exercises to start strengthening the muscles of your foot.

- **Towel pickup:** With your heel on the ground, pick up a towel with your toes. Release. Repeat 10 to 20 times. When this gets easy, add more resistance by placing a book or small weight on the towel.
- **Balance and reach exercises:** Stand next to a chair with your injured leg farther from the chair. The chair will provide support if you need it. Stand on the foot of your injured leg and bend your knee slightly. Try to raise the arch of this foot while keeping your big toe on the floor. Keep your foot in this position.
- With the hand that is farther away from the chair, reach forward in front of you by bending at the waist. Avoid bending your knee any more as you do this. Repeat this 15 times. To make the exercise more challenging, reach farther in front of you. Do 2 sets of 15.
- While keeping your arch raised, reach the hand that is farther away from the chair across your body toward the chair. The farther you reach, the more challenging the exercise. Do 2 sets of 15.
- **Heel raise:** Stand behind a chair or counter with both feet flat on the floor. Using the chair or counter as a support, rise up onto your toes and hold for 5 seconds. Then slowly lower yourself down without holding onto the support. (It's OK to keep holding onto the support if you need to.) When this exercise becomes less painful,

try doing this exercise while you are standing on the injured leg only. Repeat 15 times. Do 2 sets of 15. Rest 30 seconds between sets.

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References

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