



DON'T GET SIDELINED— GET ACTIVE!

Exercising, walking, shopping—no matter what the activity, heel pain can stop you in your tracks. Take a look at the common causes of heel pain and how you can prevent it so you can stay on your feet!



HEEL SPURS

What is it?

A bony growth on the underside of the heel bone.

What causes it?

Heel spurs result from strain on the muscles and ligaments of the foot, by stretching of the long band of tissue that connects the heel and the ball of the foot, and by repeated tearing away of the lining or membrane that covers the heel bone.

PLANTAR FASCIITIS

What is it?

An inflammation of the band of fibrous connective tissue (fascia) running along the bottom (plantar surface) of the foot, from the heel to the ball of the foot.

What causes it?

Plantar fasciitis occurs when the plantar fascia is strained over time beyond its normal extension, causing the soft tissue fibers of the fascia to tear or stretch at points along its length.

EXCESSIVE PRONATION

What is it?

An abnormal amount of stretching and pulling on the ligaments and tendons attaching to the bottom back of the heel bone.

What causes it?

Pronation is the normal flexible motion and flattening of the arch of the foot that allows it to adapt to ground surfaces and absorb shock in the normal walking pattern. Excessive pronation is the excessive inward motion.

ACHILLES TENDINITIS

What is it?

Pain in the back of the heel.

What causes it?

Achilles tendinitis happens when the Achilles tendon is inflamed.

HOW CAN I PREVENT HEEL PAIN?

- Wear shoes that fit well—front, back, and sides—and have shock-absorbent soles, rigid shanks, and supportive heel counters
- Wear the proper shoes for each activity
- Do not wear shoes with excessive wear on heels or soles
- Prepare properly before exercising. Warm up and do stretching exercises before and after running.



Be sure you're seeing the most qualified health-care professional to treat your feet by looking for the letters "DPM" after his or her name. The DPM means a physician has completed years of rigorous foot and ankle training in podiatric medical school and hospital-based residency training, making him or her uniquely qualified to care for this part of the body.

Visit www.apma.org for more foot health information, or to find a podiatrist near you.