

Advertising Feature

# HEEL SPUR SYNDROME

IN medical terms, Heel Spur Syndrome (Plantar Fasciitis) is inflammation of the plantar fascia.

The plantar fascia is a tough and fibrous ligament that runs from the heel bone to the ball of the foot.

It is a condition where the plantar fascia is pulling on the periosteum at the calcaneus causing inflammation and pain.

In laymen's terms, Heel Spur Syndrome is the name given to pain directly beneath or in front of the heel, often accompanied by chronic inflammation of the plantar fascia and sometimes accompanied by a bone spur at the heel.

## SYMPTOMS

Estelle Mitchell, chartered physiotherapist, describes this condition as: 'presenting initially as a dull, intermittent pain in the heel or arch, progressing to a sharp, persistent and often piercing pain spreading through to the foot'.

She says: "The pain can be worse first thing in the morning with the first steps of the day or after you have been off your feet for a while.

This is because the fibres of the fascia try and heal themselves by growing and when you walk for the first time, these fibres are torn.

"The result - pain after resting! It usually gradually disappears with walking."

## CAUSES

In medical terms, Plantar Fasciitis is caused by a biomechanical problem causing the plantar fascia to be repeatedly over-torqued because the calcaneus in the hindfoot is stable while the forefoot is over-pronating.

This shearing force causes the plantar fascia to become inflamed because the weakest part of the plantar fascia is the attachment to the periosteum (fibrous membrane covering the bone) at the calcaneus.

When the plantar fascia is repeatedly twisted, it pulls the periosteum away from the calcaneus and causes pain and inflammation.

If this happens often enough, the calcaneus will eventually grow toward the plantar fascia in an effort to re-attach itself.

That bone growth is called a heel spur.

Such pain can also be caused by other factors:

- Excessive increase in athletic activity.
- In association with ageing.
- In association with other aches and pains such as knee or back problems.
- Flat feet or high arched feet.
- Poor supporting shoes.
- Large weight gain in a short period of time.

## TREATMENTS

Estelle advises, 'there are a couple of home treatments that can be done to ease the pain but in essence, with the problem being a biomechanical one, in this case over-pronation, this has to be controlled'. Orthotic devices that counteract pronation and disperse heel strike forces are a key component of treatment for Plantar Fasciitis. Prescriptive orthotics that control pronation and the arch elongation should be prescribed.

Other methods that can provide relief include:

1. Wear proper, supportive and cushioned shoes.
2. Use ice to reduce the inflammation (a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a damp

towel

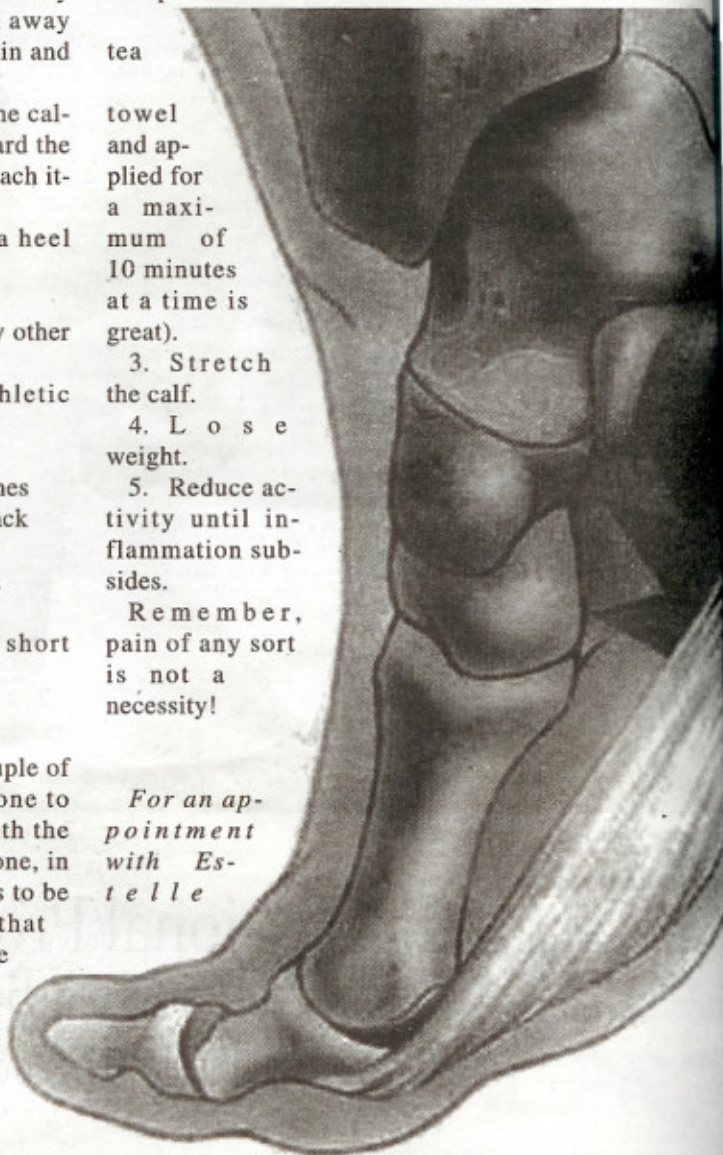
and applied for a maximum of 10 minutes at a time is great).

3. Stretch the calf.
4. Lose weight.
5. Reduce activity until inflammation subsides.

Remember, pain of any sort is not a necessity!

*For an appointment with Estelle*

Mitchell, Book your English pist, call 95 sites at: www www.marbel iofoot.com.



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