

The Heel Pain Expert Plantar Fasciitis Rehab Programme

This rehab programme provides a typical protocol I use with my plantar fasciitis patients. Whilst the programme will be suitable for most patients with plantar fasciitis, the protocol is not individualised for every patient. The pictures and instructions below should enable users to understand how to safely and effectively complete the recommended exercises. Each exercise comes with a detailed video demonstration which can be found on my YouTube channel [The Heel Pain Expert](#)



Exercise 1 - Standing gastrocnemius calf stretch

Tips

- Stand with one leg in front of the other
- Bend the front knee and keep the back leg straight
- Keep your feet facing forwards and keep your heels on the ground
- To increase the stretch lean forward or place your back leg further away from the wall
- Hold the stretch for 60 seconds and repeat 3 times for each leg
- Do this exercise twice a day

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Exercise 2 - Standing soleus calf stretch

Tips

- Stand with one leg in front of the other
- Bend both knees slightly
- Keep your feet facing forwards and keep your heels on the ground
- To increase the stretch bend your knees so that you squat down lower
- Hold the stretch for 60 seconds and repeat 3 times for each leg
- Do this exercise twice a day



Exercise 3 - Seated Plantar Fascia Stretch

Tips

- Sit with one leg crossed over the other so that your ankle is resting on your other knee
- flex the ankle upwards and flex the toes backwards
- pull on the toes back gently whilst maintaining an upwards flexion of the ankle
- to increase the stretch increase the pull on the toes
- if you do not feel much of stretch with this technique try the alternative below kneeling plantar fascia stretch (exercise 4)
- Hold the stretch for 60 seconds and repeat 3 times for each leg
- Do this exercise twice a day

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Exercise 4 - Kneeling Plantar Fascia Stretch

Tips

- place hands and knees on the floor
- flex your feet so that you are resting your toes. This should produce a stretch through the arch of the foot
- to increase the stretch move your bottom towards your heels or sit upright so that your bodyweight is resting on the back of your calf muscles/heels
- if this exercise hurts your toes it may not be a suitable exercise for you
- Hold the stretch for 60 seconds and repeat 3 times for each leg
- Do this exercise twice a day



Exercise 5 - Straight Leg Raise

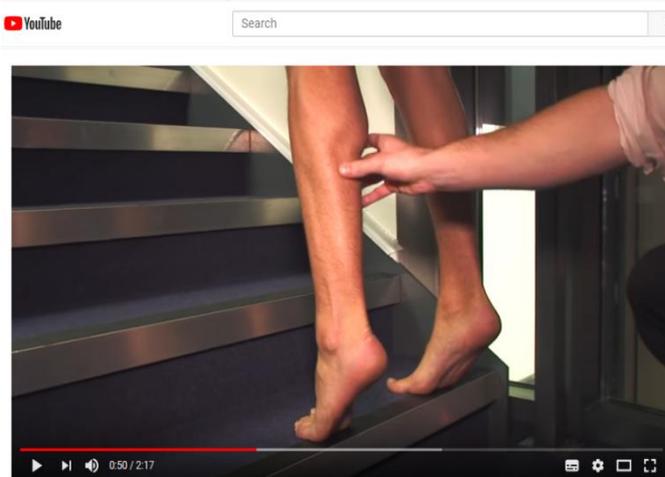
Tips

- Roll up a bath towel
- find a suitable place to lie down e.g. carpet floor

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- start sitting up with your legs straight
- wrap towel around the ball of the foot
- lie back whilst elevating your leg and use the towel as a lever to help elevate the leg
- use your upper body to maintain the tension on the towel
- to increase the stretch elevate your leg higher or pull on the towel so that it pulls the ball of the foot towards you
- Hold the stretch for 60 seconds and repeat 3 times for each leg
- Do this exercise twice a day



Exercise 6 - heel raises (loading exercise)

This exercise is different to the stretching exercises above (1-5). This is a strengthening exercise and the aim is different to the stretching exercises. The aim of the stretching exercises is to increase flexibility of the plantar fascia, calf and hamstring muscles which reduces loading stress on the plantar fascia. The aim of exercise 6 is to strengthen the foot and lower limb muscles and increase the load tolerance of the plantar fascia. Research has demonstrated that calf muscle strengthening exercises can help recovery of plantar fasciitis.

Tips

- use a step/stairs and place balls of the feet on the edge of the step
- use a banister or something to hold on to maintain upper body balance
- go up slowly on to tip toes as high as you can comfortably go. This should take approximately 3 seconds
- hold the exercise at the highest point for 3 seconds
- slowly lower your heels until your heels are parallel with the step. This should take approximately 3 seconds
- Do not overhang your heels beyond the level of the step

Example strengthening programme progression

- Choose a starting level
- perform repetitions as per instructions above
- rest for 2 minutes
- perform 3 sets in total
- perform strengthening programme 3-4 times per week with 1 day rest between
- progress repetitions as per the table below. This is based on your ability levels. If the exercise is not challenging progress to the next level
- If the exercise is painful choose a lower level
- If level 1 is still painful, you may not be ready to start a strengthening programme

Level	Technique	Repetitions	Sets
1	Double heel support	10	3
2	Double heel support	15	3
3	Double heel support	20	3
4	Single heel support	5	3
5	Single heel support	10	3
6	Single heel support	15	3
7	Single heel support	20	3
8	Single heel support with extra weight (5kg)	10	3
9	Single heel support with extra weight (5kg)	15	3
10	Single heel support with extra weight (5kg)	20	3
11	Single heel support with extra weight (10kg)	10	3
12	Single heel support with extra weight (10kg)	15	3
13	Single heel support with extra weight (10kg)	20	3
14	Single heel support with extra weight (15kg)	10	3
15	Single heel support with extra weight (15kg)	15	3
16	Single heel support with extra weight (15kg)	20	3

Additional information

Typically a programme like this should be performed 3 or 4 times per week with a rest day in between. Please note though that any exercise programme needs to be designed to suit the individual and this may not be appropriate for those with more irritable symptoms or different rehab needs.

I also provide one to one consultations at the Heel Pain Expert Heel Pain Clinic. Please check out the website www.theheelpainexpert.com for more details.

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