

Heel pain

There are lots of causes of heel pain. You can usually ease the pain yourself. But talk to your GP if the pain does not improve.

Easing heel pain

If you see your GP, they'll usually suggest you try these things:

Do

- ✓ rest and raise your heel when you can
- ✓ put an ice pack (or bag of frozen peas) in a towel on your heel for up to 20 minutes every 2 to 3 hours
- ✓ wear wide comfortable shoes with a low heel and soft sole
- ✓ use soft insoles or heel pads in your shoes
- ✓ wrap a bandage around your heel and ankle to support it
- ✓ try regular gentle stretching exercises
- ✓ take paracetamol

Don't

- ✗ do not take ibuprofen for the first 48 hours after an injury
- ✗ do not walk or stand for long periods
- ✗ do not wear high heels or tight pointy shoes

Ask your pharmacist about:

- the best painkiller to take
- insoles and pads for your shoes
- treatments for common skin problems
- if you need to see a GP

When to contact your GP

Contact your GP if:

- the pain is severe or stopping you from doing normal activities
- the pain is getting worse or keeps coming back
- the pain has not improved after treating it at home for 2 weeks
- you have any tingling or loss of sensation in your foot
- you have diabetes – foot problems can be more serious if you have diabetes

► [What we mean by severe pain](#)

When to go to the emergency department (ED)

Go to your nearest ED if you:

- have severe pain
- feel faint, dizzy or sick from the pain
- have an ankle or foot that has changed shape or is at an odd angle
- heard a snap, grinding or popping noise at the time of injury
- are not able to walk

These might be signs of a broken heel bone or broken ankle.

Causes of heel pain

Common causes of heel pain are exercising too much or wearing shoes that are too tight.

Your symptoms may help you find the cause of your heel pain.

Possible causes of heel pain:

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Symptoms Sharp pain between your arch and heel, feels worse when you start walking and better when resting, difficulty raising your toes off the floor

Possible cause plantar fasciitis

Symptoms Pain in your ankle and heel, pain in your calf when standing on your tiptoes

Possible cause Achilles tendonitis

Symptoms Redness and swelling, dull aching pain

Possible cause bursitis

Symptoms Sudden sharp pain, swelling, a popping or snapping sound during the injury, difficulty walking

Possible cause heel fracture or ruptured Achilles tendon

Do not worry if you're not sure what the problem is.

Follow the advice on this page and see your GP if the pain does not get better in 2 weeks.

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