

# What Actually Works for Plantar Fasciitis?

## Real Evidence, Not Guesswork

### TIRED OF CONFLICTING ADVICE?

Stretch it. Don't stretch it. Ice it. Walk on it. Rest it. Strengthen it.

If you've searched online about plantar heel pain (often called plantar fasciitis), you've probably seen **all** of those – often in the same breath.

This leaflet breaks through the noise and shares what **clinical research** and **real-world outcomes** actually support.

It's not hype. It's not outdated. It's the stuff that works.

### 1 MOST RELIABLE TREATMENTS (SUPPORTED BY STRONG EVIDENCE)

- **Calf and plantar fascia stretching**  
Daily stretching – especially first thing in the morning – significantly reduces pain and improves function
- **Footwear support and orthotics**  
Supportive shoes and prefabricated orthotics can offload the plantar fascia and speed recovery, especially in the early phase
- **Strengthening exercises (load management)**  
Strength-based rehab (especially progressive calf and foot strengthening) helps restore tissue capacity and reduce recurrence
- **Patient education and activity modification**  
Understanding aggravating factors (like overloading or prolonged standing) and adjusting activity is crucial for long-term management

### 2 SOMETIMES HELPFUL (DEPENDS ON THE PERSON)

- **Night splints**  
May improve morning symptoms for some patients with chronic plantar heel pain, but compliance can be low

- **Manual therapy and massage**  
Soft tissue mobilisation may improve short-term comfort when combined with exercise and education – but not as a stand-alone fix
- **Shockwave therapy**  
Can be effective for chronic (>6 month) cases not responding to exercise-based programmes; better results with focused vs. radial shockwave

### 3 WHAT DOESN'T WORK (OR ISN'T WORTH IT)

- **Complete rest or immobilisation**  
Total unloading slows healing and worsens tissue resilience
- **Repeated corticosteroid injections**  
May offer temporary relief but carry risks of plantar fascia rupture and fat pad atrophy
- **"Walking through the pain"**  
Persistently loading a severely irritated heel without adaptation delays recovery
- **Random online routines**  
Non-tailored stretching, aggressive massage, or inappropriate loading can worsen symptoms rather than help

### 4 A WORD ON TIMEFRAMES

With a good plan, **early improvements** often happen within 6–8 weeks – but full recovery may take 3–6 months, especially for chronic cases

Consistency and patience beat chasing miracle cures.

### YOUR RECOVERY IS WITHIN REACH

Left untreated, plantar fasciitis can develop into chronic heel pain that interferes with daily activities. To avoid the pain, people often alter their walking pattern – a change that can trigger foot, knee, hip, or back problems through faulty movement mechanics.

Evidence-based, progressive, and personalised care can get you back on your feet – and feeling stronger than before.

If you're unsure where to start, a trained **musculoskeletal practitioner** can tailor a recovery plan to your needs. If you have questions, please feel free to get in touch.



### Real Talk: What Smart Recovery Looks Like

Modify – don't completely stop – activity

- Stretch daily (especially mornings)
- Wear supportive footwear (no barefoot at home!)
- Strengthen foot, calf, and hip muscles progressively
- Seek guidance from a trained musculoskeletal clinician if progress stalls

This is the pathway that's evidence-backed.

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