

Plantar Fasciitis: 5 Things I Wish I'd Known Sooner

Hard-earned lessons from patients, backed by research

IF YOU'RE DEALING WITH HEEL PAIN THAT JUST WON'T QUIT, THIS ONE'S FOR YOU.

Plantar heel pain (often referred to as plantar fasciitis) has a way of sneaking up on you – first a twinge, then a stab, then months of frustration. If you're feeling like you're doing *all the right things* but nothing's helping, this guide will help. It pulls together the most common "I wish I'd known sooner" insights from people who've lived it – plus what the research really says works.

1 IT'S NOT JUST A MORNING THING – AND NO, YOU'RE NOT BEING DRAMATIC.

People often think plantar heel pain is just "morning heel pain." In reality, the pain can linger all day, or come and go unpredictably. It can make you limp, avoid stairs, and dread getting out of bed. The good news? That pain is a real, well-documented condition – and with the right approach, it is treatable. *"I thought it would go away on its own. Months later I could barely walk the dog."*

2 RESTING COMPLETELY? NOT THE ANSWER.

It's tempting to stop walking altogether – but full rest often makes things worse. What helps instead? A gentle, consistent load. Research shows that structured stretching, supportive footwear, and progressive strengthening are far more effective than staying off your feet completely. Your foot needs the right kind of movement to heal.

✓ **Try:** Morning calf stretches, rolling a frozen bottle under your foot, or gentle foot strength exercises.

✗ **Skip:** Total bed rest, walking barefoot on hard floors, or "pushing through" intense pain.

3 SUPPORTIVE SHOES AREN'T OPTIONAL. THEY'RE TREATMENT.

Your shoes are your shock absorbers. If you're wearing flat, unsupportive shoes (yes, even around the house), you're probably sabotaging your recovery. Even short barefoot stints on hard flooring can re-aggravate symptoms.

When switching to new supportive footwear, make the transition gradually. You might also need different shoes for different activities – what works for work might not be ideal for exercise.

✓ **Insoles and supportive trainers** have been shown in multiple studies to reduce pain – especially when used consistently. *"I now have 'house trainers.' Never barefoot, even in the kitchen. Game changer."*

4 YOU PROBABLY NEED TO CHANGE MORE THAN ONE THING.

Many people try just one thing at a time – a stretch, a splint, a massage – and give up when it doesn't "fix" the pain. But plantar heel pain is stubborn. What works best is a combined approach:

- Stretching
- Activity modification
- Supportive footwear
- Load management (with professional guidance)
- Sometimes, short-term pain relief or taping
- Sleep and adequate recovery time
- Weight management (if applicable)

Think layers, not silver bullets.

5 GETTING HELP EARLY CAN SAVE YOU MONTHS OF PAIN.

Too many people wait 6+ months before seeking help – often because they think the pain isn't "serious enough." In reality,

early guidance from a physiotherapist, osteopath, chiropractor, podiatrist, or sports therapist can dramatically shorten your recovery time.

"I finally booked an appointment after 8 months. They showed me what to do and it started improving within weeks. I wish I'd gone sooner."

What people say after 6+ months of plantar heel pain...

- "I didn't realise shoes made that much difference."
- "I wasted so much time doing random YouTube exercises."
- "I wish someone had told me to take it seriously earlier."
- "It's not just foot pain – it messes with your mood and sleep too."
- "The small daily changes worked better than anything drastic."

Bottom Line: You're not stuck – you're just missing the full picture.

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.

If you're frustrated, don't give up. With the right mix of movement, support, and treatment, most people recover – even if it's been months.

This leaflet is just a starting point. A practitioner trained in musculoskeletal health can help you build a plan that fits your body and your life. If you have questions, get in touch.

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