

When to Push Through Plantar Fasciitis Pain... and When to Back Off



WHY THIS MATTERS

If you're dealing with plantar fasciitis, the question always comes up:

"SHOULD I REST, OR KEEP MOVING?"

The truth isn't black or white. Some movement can speed up recovery... while the wrong kind can set you back.

This guide helps you recognise which signals to listen to and how to stay active safely.

PAIN DOESN'T ALWAYS MEAN DAMAGE

Here's something many people don't realise:

Pain is a **protective alarm**, not always a sign of harm. Even with plantar heel pain, tissues can be sore and inflamed without being "injured" in a structural way.

That means:

- Some discomfort is okay (and expected!) as you heal
- Avoiding all movement can slow recovery
- But... you still need to listen to your body's limits

QUICK REFERENCE: Helpful vs. Harmful Activity

Activity	Generally Safe	May Aggravate Symptoms
Walking short distances	With good shoes	Barefoot on hard floors
Stretching + strengthening	Especially calves	Over-stretching heel area
Stationary bike	Low impact	High-impact jumping/running/swimming
Short standing periods	Progress gradually	Long standing without breaks

WHEN IT'S OKAY TO PUSH THROUGH

It's often **safe to move** through some discomfort when:

- You're doing controlled exercises (like heel raises, stretching, or mobility work)
- The pain **reduces** as you warm up
- You feel **no sharp or stabbing pain** during the activity
- There's **no flare-up the next day**

In fact, some loading of the heel area helps it get stronger – it's a key part of recovery.

WHEN TO STOP OR MODIFY

Pull back if:

- The pain is sharp or stabbing with each step

- The discomfort **gets worse as you move**, not better
- You develop new symptoms (e.g. swelling, tingling, numbness)
- You're limping or compensating with a strange gait
- Recovery feels slower week to week, not better

FINAL THOUGHT

Pain isn't always the enemy – but it is a messenger.

With the right kind of movement, your body can heal stronger and faster. And if you're unsure, don't guess – talk to a professional.

THE TRAFFIC LIGHT GUIDE TO PAIN

Use this simple scale to decide when to keep going or ease off:



Pain Response	What It Means	Action to Take
Mild discomfort (1-3/10)	Normal during rehab	Keep going – this is safe movement!
Moderate pain (4-6/10)	Monitor closely – proceed with caution	Try a gentler version, or modify activity
Sharp, severe, or worsening pain (7+/10)	Body saying "stop!"	Back off and rest – seek advice if it persists

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