



## Suffolk Podiatry

### Heel Pain Stretching/Massage Advice

#### Why is plantar fascia stretching recommended for heel pain?

The plantar fascia is a length of connective tissue that runs from the heel bone (called the calcaneus), spreading out like a fan towards the metatarsal heads (where the toes connect to the rest of the foot).

Pain under the heel is often associated with inflammation around the plantar fascia. Massaging and “stretching” these structures is one effective way of managing heel pain.

#### General Advice for Stretching:

You can stretch any time of day but the best time is after you have “warmed up”, (so don’t stretch straight after a long period of inactivity). It is fine to watch TV or listen to music while you are stretching as long as you maintain good stretching technique throughout.

- You need to stretch daily for a few weeks before you will feel the benefit
- Take up the stretch position slowly and hold this position – do not bounce or jerk
- Try to relax breathing slowly and regularly
- Stretch at least once a day
  - if you have a reminder function on your phone, set it to prompt you when to start your stretching every day.
  - if possible stretching twice a day is better, if you can.
- Make sure to repeat the stretch for both feet.

#### Stretching the Plantar Fascia



##### Step 1) ←

Sit in a comfortable position with both feet on the ground.

##### Step 2) →

Cross your leg over your other knee, so that the foot and ankle are resting on the knee.



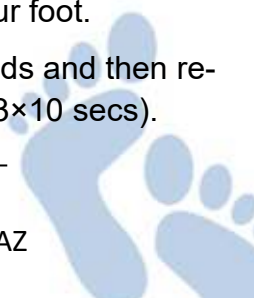
##### Step 3) →

Hold the base of the toes with your right hand and pull the toes back towards the shin.

##### Step 4) →

Working from the heel towards your toes, gently massage the sole of your foot.

Hold this stretch for 10 seconds and then repeat twice more (for a total of 3×10 secs).



## What can I do if I can't reach my feet?

Not all patients are able to reach their feet easily. If you find that is the case you might benefit from trying an alternative method of massaging and stretching the plantar fascia:

### Using a wall



- 1) Stand close to the wall, with the toes up against the wall.
- 2) Slowly apply pressure until the toes are being pushed back and up towards your shin.
- 3) Hold this stretch for 30-40 seconds and then repeat on the other foot.

### Using a roller:

Many different types of foot roller are available (try your local pharmacy or the internet). You can also use a golf ball or tennis ball, or even a drinks bottle filled with hot water or ice (wrapped in a tea towel).

- 1) Sit in a comfortable chair place your chosen roller on the floor in front of you.
- 2) Gently roll your foot up and down on the roller for 30-40 seconds, applying enough pressure that you can feel it, but not so much as to cause pain.
- 3) Repeat 2-3 times on both feet.

If you are using a drinks bottle, try alternating between hot and cold as this may help to control and reduce inflammation.



## IMPORTANT:

Although stretching can be uncomfortable, it should never be painful. If you feel any pain (especially sharp pain), it may indicate that you are pushing too hard. Try to ease into the stretch rather than forcing it. If you find that stretching is still too painful, please discontinue and seek advice from a podiatrist or physiotherapist.

---

Suffolk Podiatry  
Podiatry Hub, Riverside Clinic 2-4 Landseer Rd, Ipswich, Suffolk , IP3 0AZ  
[www.suffolkfed.org.uk](http://www.suffolkfed.org.uk)

