

## **Plantar fasciitis**

The plantar fascia is a thick, triangular connective tissue structure (“fascia”) that attaches on the underside of the heel (the “plantar” surface of the calcaneus bone) and spreads out like a fan to the five toes. It is the main weight-bearing structure in the foot. Essentially it holds the bony arches of your foot together when the high-impact forces of running want to collapse the foot. It is prone to microtrauma and repetitive-stress injuries at its attachment point in the heel. As inflammation begins to develop with a failed healing response by the body, plantar fasciitis will feel like a hot, sharp pain deep in the underside of the heel, and when worse will often radiate into the calf or along the medial arch of the foot.

The possibility of developing plantar fasciitis increases if the runner demonstrates one or more risk factors. Risk factors include:

- flat feet (i.e fallen medial arches) with associated weak intrinsic muscles of the foot
- insufficiently supportive footwear
- tight calf muscles
- biomechanical dysfunctions in the ankle such as might arise from previous sprains
- alignment problems in the hip, knee, or ankle

The prognosis for recovery is good and immediate symptomatic management should include icing and gentle stretching of the calf muscle. Treatment should commence as soon as possible to address the inflammation and correct the risk factors mentioned above. At Craven’s Sport Services we have long experience with the management of these injuries, and will perform a detailed history, thorough biomechanical examination and movement analysis. We will also adjust training intensity and volume to create the optimal conditions for healing and to minimize disruption to your training goals. At the end of the initial one-hour consult we will have a plan to move forward!