

new treatment option for chronic plantar fasciitis sufferers

Plantar fasciitis, also known as heel spur syndrome, is a common problem associated with debilitating pain on the bottom of the heel. Typically, aching or sharp heel pain is noticed when first bearing weight in the morning, or following periods of sitting. Pain can be significant following prolonged standing, walking or running.

The diagnosis of plantar fasciitis is generally straightforward. A thorough history will be taken in order to rule out various systemic arthritic conditions which may be associated with heel pain. A physical examination should also be performed by a medical doctor or physiotherapist. Diagnostic tests may include x-rays, ultrasound and/or MRI which may or may not reveal a small bone spur on the heel (calcaneous) bone.

Conservative medical treatment for plantar fasciitis generally includes both an anti-inflammatory and a mechanical approach. Oral anti-inflammatory medications (either over-the-counter or prescription) as well as injectible anti-inflammatory steroids are often recommended by physicians.

A physiotherapist will take a more mechanical approach to treatment, including recommendation of appropriate shoe-wear, heel cushions, custom fabricated in-shoe orthoses, various stretching exercises, acupuncture, massage therapy or Active Release techniques.

An athlete who continues to have disabling pain following at least six months of treatment with these various conservative modalities would be an excellent candidate for Radial Shockwave Treatment.

Radial Shockwave Treatment is restoring patients with chronic heel pain quickly back to normal, active lifestyles. A non-invasive procedure similar to lithotripsy used in the treatment of kidney stones, Shockwave uses therapeutic pneumatic or pressure waves to relieve the pain and inflammation in the plantar fascia tendon on the bottom of the foot.



With chronic plantar fasciitis, the body's normal inflammatory response has diminished to a point where blood flow is decreased to the injured area of the fascia. Without adequate blood flow to any injured tissue, one's normal repair mechanisms



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are compromised. Radial Shockwave treatment initiates angiogenesis, or formation of new blood vessels. It helps to jump-start a normal inflammatory response which can lead to healing in cases where other conservative treatments have not proven effective. The shockwaves can also act to over-stimulate pain transmission nerves, which can lead to a reduction in sensitivity and discomfort.

Depending upon which study is evaluated, success rates for plantar fasciitis are consistently greater than 70% three months following Radial Shockwave treatment. Typically four treatment sessions are required, one session every 7-10 days for three sessions, followed by a fourth session 4 weeks after the third. Many insurance companies may offer coverage for Radial Shockwave Treatment administered by a physiotherapist.

Nancy Botting is a Registered Physiotherapist with a Diploma in Sport Physiotherapy. She was a member of the Canadian medical team for the Atlanta Olympic Games and Athens and Beijing Paralympics. She loves spending time outdoors with her two kids and continues to compete in Outrigger Canoe racing. Physical Edge Physiotherapy in Oakville, Ontario located at 581 Argus Road, Suite 200 is now offering Radial Shockwave Treatment. For more information call 905-844-8425 or visit www.physicaledgephysio.com.