

Welcome to our  
**Newsletter**  
designed to provide  
you with current  
information about  
physiotherapy...

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## DO HEEL SPURS HEAL?



**Canberra Leaders in  
Physiotherapy for  
Sports Back & Muscle  
Injuries...**

*If you have any health concerns, it is essential to undertake a full physical assessment with your Physio at The Sports Medicine Centre to achieve your healthy goals in 2013!*

Call 6247 7033 or 6293 3413 for an appointment...



Do you experience heel pain with your first steps in the morning?  
Do you have a sharp stabbing pain at the bottom or front of the heel bone?  
Does the pain subside after a while and turn into a dull ache?  
Does the pain come back after sitting for a long period?

Because we spend so much of our time standing or walking, painful feet are very distressing. Pain in the heel area is especially common and may be associated with a calcaneal spur, sometimes called a heel spur.

Heel spurs are a very common foot problem in Australia, with thousands of people suffering each year. Fortunately, for most people there's an effective and affordable treatment solution to this painful foot condition.

### **What causes a heel spur?**

A heel spur is a bony growth on the calcaneus (heel bone). The heel spur itself is actually not causing any pain. It is the inflamed tissue around the spur that causes pain and discomfort. The most common cause of heel pain and heel spurs is Plantar Fasciitis (inflammation of Plantar Fascia).

The Plantar Fascia is the flat band of fibrous tissue under the foot that connects your calcaneus to your metatarsals (toes) to support the arch of your foot. Normally, the fascia should be flexible and strong. Sometimes due to incorrect foot function such as over-pronation the plantar fascia is stretched out excessively with every step we take. Consequently the ligament starts to pull away from its weakest point: ie. where the fascia inserts into the calcaneus.



This constant tension leads to micro-tearing of the tissue and inflammation at the attachment of the plantar fascia and heel bone, causing heel pain. During rest (e.g. when you're asleep or sitting), the plantar fascia tightens and shortens. When getting up body weight is rapidly applied to the foot and the fascia must stretch and quickly lengthen, causing micro-tearing in the fascia. Hence, the stabbing pain with your first steps in the morning or after sitting for a while.

Because of the continuous pulling of the fascia at the heel bone, the body eventually responds by developing a bony growth on the heel bone.

Welcome Back Alexia!!!

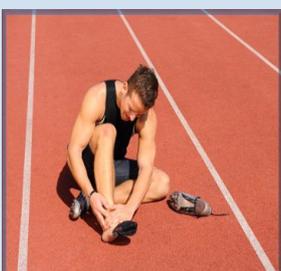
The Sports Medicine Centre is pleased to announce the return of physiotherapist Alexia Missen. Alexia has been travelling for the past 6 months. While abroad she worked at Perfect Balance Clinic, a multidisciplinary clinic in Central London.

Alexia is starting back with us on 26 February 2013, and will be working at the Turner practice on Wednesdays and Fridays, and at Tuggeranong on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

If you are suffering from any injury big or small, sporting or non sporting, please call up to make an appointment with Alexia today. If you are a former patient she would love to see you and how you are going!

We offer a range of services including Physio, Pilates, exercise classes and therapeutic massage. If you would like to make an appointment or have further enquiries visit our website [www.sportsmedicinecentre.com.au](http://www.sportsmedicinecentre.com.au) or phone us on 6247 7033 or 6293 3413

Prevention treatment & rehabilitation of all sporting injuries...



This is called a Heel Spur or Calcaneal spur.

**Heel spurs are more likely to happen if:**

- you suffer from over-pronation (flattening of the arch when the foot lands )
- you stand or walk on hard surfaces, for long periods
- you are overweight or pregnant
- you have tight calf muscles



- you are over 45

### How to treat a Heel Spur & Plantar Fasciitis

#### Rest or reduced activity

Because the ligament around your heel bone is inflamed, you need to give the tissue a chance to recover. Avoid any running, sports, walking distances, walking up or down hills and standing for pro-longed periods – your physio can advise you about avoiding activities that aggravate the plantar fascia. Tape may also be applied by the Physio to help deload the heel spur.

Completely avoid any barefoot walking on hard tiles and floors, especially first thing in the morning!

#### Remedial massage and myofascial release

Massage can help with pain relief and lengthening of tight structures of the calf hammies and buttock which can lead to plantar fasciitis. Release thru the fascia can also aid in biomechanical correction.

#### Stretches & Home Exercise Routine

Physio can advise on stretches to correct tightness of the calf muscles and achilles tendons which can hamper our natural walking pattern, placing excess strain on the plantar fascia. Using a spiky ball to self massage the plantar fascia is also beneficial.

#### Ice & anti- inflammatories

Two or three times a day, apply an ice pack directly onto the heel for 10 -15 minutes. This will help reduce the inflammation and provide temporary pain

relief. Anti-inflammatory medications like Ibuprofen or Voltaren will help decrease the inflammation of the plantar fascia as a result of the tissue micro-tearing. Ultrasound can also be a beneficial adjunct to treatment.

#### Custom fit and pre made Orthotics

Orthotic insoles are used to correct foot biomechanics and support the medial arch. Physios are best trained to assess the need for orthotics and prescribe the most suitable to your life style and sporting needs – from a shock absorbing gel insole to a customised orthotic which can restore an incorrect walking & running pattern.

#### Education

Physios can provide advice on changes to footwear, sporting technique or work habits to correct the cause as well as the symptoms of a heel spur.



#### Persistent Heel Pain

Night splints may be worn to keep the plantar fascia stretched out when you sleep, helping to prevent contracture of the arch.

Cortisone injections have also been shown to be beneficial in persistent cases, with extracorporeal shock wave therapy using energy pulses to decrease the micro trauma over the calcaneal insertion also showing some promise. In extreme cases( <5%) where conservative options have failed and pain has persisted for greater than a year surgical options may be considered. This may include a plantar fascia release and/or a tarsal tunnel release. Rehabilitation will include physio and orthotic therapy.

### CAN PHYSIO HELP?

Your Canberra Physio is the best person to assess your heel pain and tailor a treatment to achieve lasting results to enjoy a healthy, injury-free life! Part of this is equipping you with the tools and techniques to self progress outside of the consulting room. For an accurate diagnosis and tailored treatment plan call **6247 7033 or 6293 3413** and make an appointment today!