

Plantar Fasciitis

Sheila presented to physiotherapy with dull intermittent pain in the bottom of her heel that was worse in the morning or after prolonged periods of sitting. Sheila underwent a thorough examination to determine the cause of her foot pain. Pain in the subcalcaneal region (heel) may arise from a variety of pain sensitive structures and have a multi-factorial cause. To determine the appropriate physiotherapy intervention predisposing factors must be considered and all possible sources of pain must be assessed. Sheila had plantar fasciitis, this is inflammation of the fascia—a fibrous band on the bottom of the foot attached at the heel and fanning towards the toes. This inflammation can be caused by over stretching and repetitive compression trauma of the tissues in prolonged, standing, walking and running; flat pronated feet; increased compression forces (excess weight); improper foot wear; inflexibility of related muscles i.e. achilles tendon.

Fortunately, Sheila had the symptoms for only a few weeks and therefore responded well to treatment. Early intervention is critical to manage the adhesions and scar tissue from the inflammation.

She had a course of physiotherapy that included:

- Exercise to relax the fascia and strengthen the foot and ankle.
- Treatment to decrease the inflammation and increase the flexibility of the foot.
- Prevention and education measures to help healing and prevent further damage, this included education re: footwear and taping of the plantar fascia and home remedies to reduce inflammation and modification of activities.