

Can You Run with Plantar Fasciitis?

By Dr. Jon DeGorter, DC



If you have plantar fasciitis then you know how much this heel injury can hurt when you hit the pavement or even get out of bed. While taking time off from running is the best way to heal faster, many runners want to continue training despite the pain. It's possible to continue running with a mild case of plantar fasciitis, a painful irritation of the ligament that runs along the bottom of the foot and connects the front of your foot to your heel. But you should still treat the cause of the injury or risk becoming sidelined entirely.

With a mild case of plantar fasciitis, you'll feel pain at the start, which fades as your run continues. This is an indication that your pain is due in part to muscular tightness, and you should work on your calf tightness, ankle mobility, and hip strength. You should not increase the volume and intensity of your runs, and preferably scale back a bit.

If you have persistent pain from the beginning of your run to the end it is best to stop running for a period of time, or you may cause more serious tissue damage. You also risk additional injury caused by the abnormal movement patterns from running with pain. Continuing to train will not only be more painful, it can make your injury progressively worse, which could mean even more time off from running to fully recover. No matter the severity of your plantar fasciitis it is important to understand that continuing to run without addressing the source of your pain is a recipe for future complications.

Plantar fasciitis is often caused by increasing training too aggressively, tight calves, improper footwear, or foot stabilization issues such as excessive pronation or supination. The repetitive stress from the rolling of the foot when heel striking will cause irritation to the tissue. Many times a heel spur can also form. Injury to the plantar fascia usually involves other areas of the kinetic chain – the ankle, calf, knee, hip and/or lower back – the ankle can be unstable, the calf could be tight, the knee can develop soreness, the hip can be sore and restrictive, and the lower back can develop instability and muscle spasms.

Tips for running with plantar fasciitis

If you plan to continue training, taping and orthotics will help support your arches and decrease stress on your plantar fascia. A sports injury professional can show you proper taping techniques. Taping is also a great way to decide whether arch supports would be helpful before you invest in orthotics.

You can continue running if your symptoms are under control and you follow a daily stretching regimen, including stretching your ankle, calf, and plantar fascia. You should always warm up before any physical activity. Focus on dynamic stretches that activate your muscles, including hip flexors, quads, hamstrings, glutes and calves. After your body is warmed up, stretch the heel and arch area. After any activity you should ice your plantar fascia for 10 to 15 minutes. Try an ice bottle massage by rolling your foot over a frozen water bottle.

If your pain increases you should take a break from running and get a professional assessment. Self care remedies are helpful, but for full rehabilitation and to rebuild strength and function of affected muscles, you need to address underlying scar tissue adhesions that develop in the muscles and surrounding soft tissues. Without first treating the adhesions that are restricting normal motion and

interfere with the flexibility and contraction of the foot muscles, stretches and icing are much less effective and slower to produce relief or recovery.

Active Release Technique[®] along with **Cold Laser** and **Radial Pulse therapies**, FDA-approved plantar-fasciitis treatments, are highly effective in treating stubborn foot issues like Plantar Fasciitis. A trained **ART**[®] provider pinpoints the specific problem areas contributing to the injury, then treats not only the plantar fascia, but the soft tissues surrounding the foot and the connective tissues that work in unison with the plantar tissues. The most effective treatment is deep tissue massage to the arch, calf muscles and muscles of the foot, complemented with specific foot strengthening and stability exercises. Unlike cortisone injections, **ART**[®], **Cold Laser Therapy** and **Radial Pulse therapy** stimulate repair and accelerate healing by restoring normal tissue flexibility, and reestablishing full flexibility, balance and stability.

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