

Plantar Fasciitis - My Heel is Killing Me!

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Heel pain can be debilitating. The physicians at Valley Podiatry Associates know firsthand just how difficult living with heel pain can be and the best ways to treat it. But, what exactly is heel pain?

Heel pain can be caused by several different disorders, but the most common cause of heel pain is known as plantar fasciitis. Plantar fasciitis is an inflammation of tissue called the plantar fascia that starts in the heel bone, runs along the bottom of the foot and attaches to the toes, creating the arch of the foot. When this tissue becomes irritated and inflamed it causes pain in the heel known as plantar fasciitis. The most common symptoms of plantar fasciitis are pain in the bottom of the heel or arch, difficulty walking or standing, pain first thing in the morning or after rest and pain at the end of the day.



Each patient may experience heel pain in slightly different ways, but for the most part is all caused by the inflammation of the plantar fascia.

There are many type of treatment for plantar fasciitis. To start, patients should seek treatment by a Podiatrist

for evaluation and diagnosis. Once diagnosis is confirmed treatment can include a regimen for inflammation reduction such as icing, stretching, supportive shoes, orthotics and possible anti-inflammatory medication such as steroid injections as tolerated, but when the standard treatments for plantar fasciitis fail to relieve symptoms, more advanced therapy may be warranted.

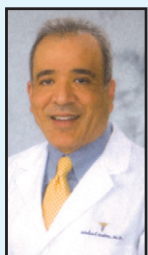
At Valley Podiatry Associates, one of the more advanced and effective treatment options for plantar fasciitis includes extra corporal activation therapy or EPAT. EPAT which is similar to shock wave therapy is performed at a physician's office, is non-invasive, safe, requires no medications or lengthy procedures, is effective and will help get you back on your feet and back to your life. The

EPAT machine produces a pulse wave therapy to increase blood flow to the injured tendon or fascia also bringing the nutrients needed to heal the injury. Patients receive anywhere from three to six treatments per foot, the sessions last approximately fifteen minutes and patients are able to walk out of the office the same day. The EPAT treatment will also continue to have benefits and continue to decreased pain and improve function for about twelve weeks after treatment has ended.

In a survey of Valley Podiatry Associates patients who underwent EPAT treatment for chronic heel pain, 80% of patients state that the treatment significantly improved their quality of life by having less pain and improved walking. Patients were able to return to their previous activities, for instance one patient states, "(I am in) much less pain, actually walked 18 holes at a golf tournament." And 90% of patients would recommend EPAT therapy to a friend or family member. On average the pain level before starting EPAT was a 9/10 on the pain scale and after completion of EPAT the pain was a 2/10 with many patients at a 0-1/10 pain scale.

Overall, EPAT therapy is safe, effective and has a high success rate. For patients suffering with plantar fasciitis there are many treatment options out there, it is important not to ignore the symptoms of heel pain, seek medical treatment and know that no matter how painful, there is hope of walking one day without pain.

While others come and go, we are here to stay!



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