

THE FIVE MOVES, WITH PHOTOS · A FREE PRINTABLE FROM THE HEEL PAIN PLAYBOOK

Plantar fasciitis exercises

The stretches and strength work I give my own patients, with the dose that works. About ten minutes a day for 14 days, then judge the trend, not one morning.

STOP AND GET HELP TODAY

- A foot suddenly cold, pale or blue, with severe pain or numbness — **ER**
- A pop or snap at the back of the heel, then weak push-off
- Can't put weight on it after an injury, or it looks deformed
- A red, hot, swollen foot with a wound, fever or feeling unwell
- Diabetes or numb feet: any new wound, blister, or a newly warm swollen foot
- A newly swollen, warm or painful calf; with chest pain, call 911

BOOK A VISIT THIS WEEK

- Pain getting worse, or back after it had settled
- Burning, tingling or numbness; pain at night or at rest
- A growing lump, or you're limping
- A child whose heel pain keeps returning
- Pain that builds the longer you're on your feet
- No better after about two weeks of good self-care

The five moves at a glance — photos and how-to on the next three pages

MOVE	HOW MUCH	WHEN
1 · Plantar fascia stretch	10 holds of 10 seconds	3 times a day — first set before you stand up
2 · Calf stretch, straight and bent knee	3 holds of 30–45 seconds	Both knee positions, daily
3 · Starter heel raises	2 sets of 10	If standing raises hurt
4 · Towel heel raise	3 × 12 slow → 5 × 8 with weight	Every other day. The one that treats it
5 · Tape, splint or cold	As needed	Pick one, for your worst symptom

TWO NUMBERS, EVERY MORNING

First-step pain, 0 to 10, and **how many minutes** before your heel loosens. The two-week trend tells you more than any single day. Tracker on page 5.

THE WHOLE PLAN IS FREE

The free 14-day plan adds the full warning signs, the pain map and the three mistakes I see every week: heelguide.com/heel-pain-playbook. No sign-up, no email.

In Michigan? See my team in Howell or Bloomfield Township: [book online](#) or call [\(810\) 206-1402](tel:8102061402).

Moves 1–2: Stretch it out

MOVE 1 · EVERY DAY

The plantar fascia stretch



- 1 Sit down. Cross the sore foot over your other knee.
- 2 Grab **all** your toes and pull them back toward your shin until the arch feels tight.
- 3 Run your other thumb along the arch. A firm band means you've found the fascia.

10 × 10-second holds

3 times a day

First set before you stand up

This stretch beat a standard calf stretch in a randomized trial of people with long-lasting heel pain. The 2023 guideline gives fascia and calf stretching its top grade.

Not if you have hurt the foot recently, the foot is numb, or a sign on page 1 applies. Stop for sharp pain, pins and needles or color change, and judge it by the next morning.

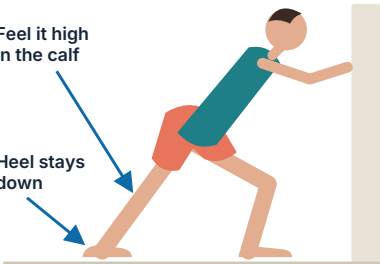
MOVE 2 · EVERY DAY

The calf stretch: straight and bent knee

A · Straight back knee

Feel it high in the calf

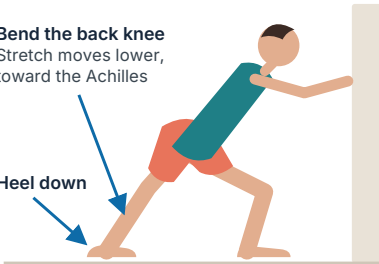
Heel stays down



B · Bent back knee

Bend the back knee
Stretch moves lower,
toward the Achilles

Heel down



Hands on a wall. Step one foot back with the heel down and toes pointing forward. Lean in until you feel a stretch in the calf. Then bend the back knee a little to move the stretch lower. A tight calf raises the load on your heel with every step.

3 × 30–45-second holds

Both knee positions

Skip or change these stretches after a new injury or with a numb foot. Pain where the Achilles meets the heel bone? Leave out deep calf stretches for now (in the full book).



WATCH · DR. TOM
BEST 25 Plantar Fasciitis
Home Treatments
(stretches, massage, shoes)

THE DAILY ROUTINE · FOUNDATION

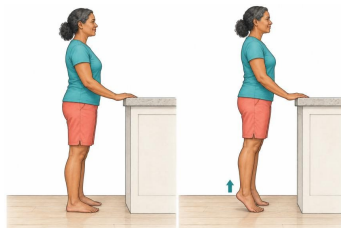
Moves 3–4: Build strength

Stretching eases the pain. Loading builds strength and tolerance. In the trial the strength group reported better function at 3 months — the fascia itself did not measurably change. Every other day, the schedule the trial used.

MOVE 3 · STARTER HEEL RAISES (IF STANDING RAISES HURT)



Seated: feet flat, lift both heels slowly, pause, lower with control. **2 × 10**



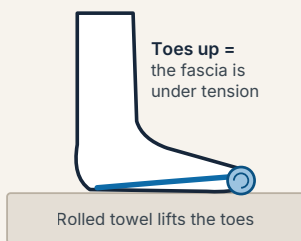
Standing, both feet: hold a counter, rise and lower slowly. **2 × 8–10** Easy? Move on.

Not if the foot is numb or you have hurt it recently. Stop for sharp pain or pins and needles.

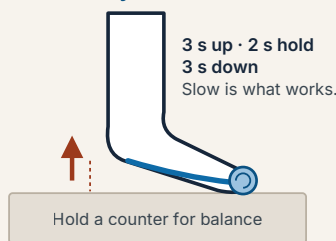
MOVE 4 · THE TOWEL HEEL RAISE

The one that treats plantar fasciitis

1 · Start



2 · Rise slowly



Stand on the sore foot, holding a rail or counter, with a **rolled towel under your toes**. Lifting the toes tightens the fascia — that is what makes this raise work. Rise over 3 seconds, hold 2, lower over 3.

Achilles pain right at the heel bone? Do raises on a flat floor only. Don't let your heel drop below the step.

Not yet if you have had a fluoroquinolone antibiotic (ciprofloxacin, levofloxacin) in the last month, are on long-term steroids, or have had a steroid injection near the heel — the tendon is temporarily weaker. Fallen in the past year, numb feet or thin bones? Stay on Move 3.

WHEN SETS × REPS

Weeks 1–2 3 × 12, body weight

Weeks 3–4 4 × 10, add a loaded backpack

Week 5 on 5 × 8, heavier again

Flared up? Judge by the next morning. First steps clearly worse? Drop back a stage for a week — don't quit; stopping restarts the clock.

The last few reps should feel hard. Could you easily do 15? Add weight.

RELIEF THAT SUPPORTS THE PLAN · OPTIONAL

Move 5: Tape, splint, soothe

None of these fix anything. They make the next two weeks livable while the exercises do the repair — which matters, because people quit on bad weeks. Pick the one matching your worst symptom.

IF MORNINGS ARE THE WORST

Night splint or sock

If your first steps hurt most mornings, the guideline recommends a 1- to 3-month course of a night splint. It looks medieval and your partner will have opinions — wear it anyway. A Strassburg-style sock is a softer alternative, though the guideline studied rigid splints, not socks. Stop if your foot goes numb or the back of your heel hurts.

Compression “fasciitis socks” don’t hold the ankle near 90°. More: [splints](#) · [taping](#)

FOR A FEW DAYS AT A TIME

Arch taping

Tape is the fastest relief in this book — what I reach for when someone has to leave my office better than they arrived. The 2023 guideline rates it highly for the first 1–6 weeks, alongside exercise. Take it off for a rash, tingling or color change.



WATCH · 1 MINUTE
[Plantar Fascia Strapping:](#)
[The Fastest Heel Pain](#)
[Relief](#)

Why a night splint can change your first step

1 · Asleep



Hours toes-down:
fascia shortens

2 · First step



Weight stretches
it all at once

3 · Splinted



Held near 90°,
toes up all night

Cold

A wrapped cold pack, about 10 minutes. Never ice on bare skin; skip it if your feet are numb or circulation is poor.

Gentle rolling

Feels wonderful, changes nothing. Roll away — just never let it stand in for the exercises.

Pain relievers

Ibuprofen or naproxen ease pain short term. Ask a pharmacist first if you have asthma, kidney, heart or liver disease, high blood pressure, past ulcers, are 60 or older or pregnant, or take blood thinners, steroids, antidepressants or blood-pressure medicines. Never two NSAIDs at once, and not past 10 days without a doctor. The rub-on gel (in the full book) is an NSAID too — one or the other, never both.

Boots and braces

A boot needs a reason — a suspected stress fracture — and a date out of it. Gloriously comfortable, which is the problem: calves fade fast.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Pick one relief tool and make it earn its place. Massage guns, red light, boots? See the full book.

FILL IT IN ON SCREEN OR PRINT IT

Your 14-day tracker

Two numbers and a few ticks — thirty seconds a day, not a tax return. The patients who actually fill this in are the ones who get better, and I have never fully decided whether that is the tracking or the personality.

Start date

Day 0 first-step pain (0-10)

Activity I want back

One change this week

Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
First-step pain 0-10														
Fascia stretch ×3	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Calf stretch	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Heel raises	.	.	.	☐	.	☐	.	☐	.	☐	.	☐	.	☐
Shoes from first step	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Walking minutes														
Next morning B / S / W														

B / S / W = better, same or worse than the morning before. Pain: 0 = none, 10 = worst you can imagine. Heel raises start on day 4, every other day.

Day 14 review

☐ **Better:** keep going and build the heel raises.

☐ **Same:** normal. Tissue that took months to get angry rarely forgives you in fourteen days. Keep going — and book a visit to confirm the diagnosis.

☐ **Worse:** book a visit now.

Notes for my visit

How to read it

Look at the trend, not one day. First-step pain drifting down, even slowly, means it is working. One bad morning after an unusually busy day happens — treat it as a signal and drop back a stage next session.

Stop and reassess before day 14 if first-step pain is higher three mornings running, any day hits 8 or more, you record “worse” three times in a week, or any sign on page 1 appears. Rising pain is not part of the plan.

Type in this PDF and save it, or print this page. Your entries stay on your device.

Day 14 and not better? Bring this tracker to us.

My team and I see heel pain in **Howell** and **Bloomfield Township**. [Book online](#) any time, or call **(810) 206-1402**.

