

# Peaking Interests

The quarterly newsletter  
of Apex Physical Therapy

Spring 2007 Volume two Issue three

## Foot Fault

### *Identifying and treating plantar fasciitis*

By Carrie Anne DePerro, PT

With the warm weather of spring and summer approaching, many of us will begin to unpack our light wardrobe and summer shoes. And the dreaded thought of sporting a bathing suit for the first time in months may cause a number of people to start an intense exercise regimen or kick their regular one into high gear.

But before you break out your flip flops or start running a couple of miles a day, you may want to consider a common foot injury called plantar fasciitis that can be caused, among other things, by bad shoes and excessive exercise.

Plantar fasciitis is an inflammatory disorder of the plantar fascia. The plantar fascia is a thick fibrous band of tissues on the bottom of your foot that connects your heel bone to your toes. It acts like a shock absorber, supporting the arch in your foot.

When tension placed on the plantar fascia becomes too great, intense stretching and small tears occur. Repetitive stretching and tearing can cause the tissues to

become irritated or inflamed.

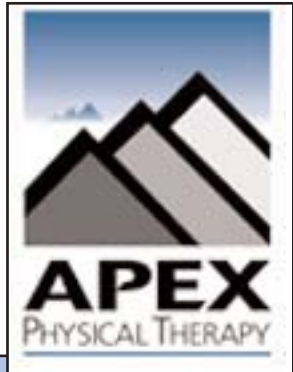
Symptoms of plantar fasciitis include heel and/or arch pain, which usually develops gradually but may come on suddenly in select cases. This pain can affect both feet, but generally occurs in only one foot at a time. It often manifests as a stabbing or burning sensation and may be accompanied by mild swelling in the heel.

The pain may occur after, but not usually during, periods of physical activity that impact one's feet. However, it is generally worse first thing in the morning or after extended periods of immobility, either sitting or standing. This is because the fascia contracts, tightening during these periods of inactivity.

The causes of plantar fasciitis can be summed up in three categories: excessive physical activity, faulty foot mechanics and improper footwear.

Physical activity in the form of new, aggressive exercise programs – especially those that involve frequent and prolonged running, jogging, walking or stair-climbing – can place undue stress

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#### Now serving Five locations

##### **Royersford**

341 10th Avenue  
Suite 101  
Royersford, PA 19468  
610-792-8100

##### **Blue Bell**

676 DeKalb Pike  
Suites 105-106  
Blue Bell, PA 19422  
610-270-0300

##### **Chalfont**

1500 Horizon Drive  
Suite 102E  
Chalfont, PA 18914  
215-712-0300

##### **Pottstown-Coventry**

10 Glocker Way  
Pottstown, PA 19465  
610-323-4300

##### **Lafayette Hill**

466 Germantown Pike  
Suite 200  
Lafayette Hill, PA 19444  
610-832-7510

#### Hours of operation

Mon-Thurs: 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.  
Fri: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Sat: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

#### Check out our Web site

[www.apex-pt.com](http://www.apex-pt.com)

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# Plantar fasciitis: an injury that's a real pain in the...foot.

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on the heel bone and plantar fascia tissue. However, simple household or work-related exertion, like a day or two of moving heavy items, can also trigger the pain.

Individuals with flat feet, excessively arched feet or abnormal walking patterns may also be more likely to develop plantar fasciitis. This is because their faulty foot mechanics adversely affect the way weight is distributed on the foot, which in turn places undue stress on the plantar fascia. Older and overweight individuals, as well as pregnant women, are also particularly prone to faulty foot mechanics.

Footwear inadequacies that can contribute to plantar fasciitis are numerous. Thin soles, stiff soles, high heels, weak arch support and loose fit can all contribute to a lack of shock absorption and failure to sufficiently protect one's plantar fascia. Going barefoot can also be deemed a footwear inadequacy.

If you are experiencing pain in your heel and foot that you believe to be caused by plantar fasciitis, you may be able to treat yourself at home by decreasing your amount of physical activity, changing your footwear and stretching your foot or feet in the mornings and after long periods of standing, walking or running. However, if your condition does not improve after a few weeks, you should seek medical advice from a doctor or physical therapist.

A family doctor or podiatrist will assess your symptoms in order to rule out other causes of your pain, such as tendonitis, arthritis, nerve irritation, cysts or stress fractures. In some cases, they may recommend aggressive treatment, such as cortisone injections. However, most doctors will first recommend more conservative treatment in the form of physical therapy.

Physical therapy treatment for plantar fasciitis

includes stretching and manual soft tissue techniques to mobilize the plantar fascia. Modalities, such as moist heat or ice, may be used for pain relief. Non-invasive methods of administering an anti-inflammatory medication, such as ultrasound or electrical stimulation, may also provide relief of pain. Your therapist can give tips on proper footwear and taping of your foot, if necessary. But most importantly, they will help you develop a home exercise program to strengthen the

*The causes of plantar fasciitis can be summed up in three categories: excessive physical activity, faulty foot mechanics and improper footwear.*

muscles in your foot and improve flexibility in order to prevent your symptoms from recurring.

Ignoring plantar fasciitis can result in the condition becoming chronic. It can also lead to knee, hip and back problems, caused by the way the injury changes your manner of walking.

So, be aware of any pain in your arch and heel and seek medical help immediately if the condition fails to improve. If attended to promptly, plantar fasciitis is a very treatable injury.

## Meet our Apex Staff



**Carrie Anne DePerro, PT  
Chalfont**

Carrie Anne DePerro joined the Apex team as a physical therapist in our Chalfont office in March 2006. She received her master's in Physical Therapy and her bachelor's in Health Sciences from the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia in May 2000.

Over the last seven years, Carrie Anne has provided physical therapy in both acute hospital and outpatient clinical settings. She has worked in

Pennsylvania and New Jersey, with young and elderly patients alike. Her wide range of experience, she says, allows her to empathize with clients with a variety of disabilities and functional limitations.

Carrie Anne has been a member of the American Physical Therapy Association since 1999. In addition, she attends the Pennsylvania Physical Therapy Association's annual conference in October in order to stay up-to-date with the latest advances in the field. Her areas of clinical interest include shoulder, hip and knee rehabilitation.

Outside the office, Carrie Anne likes to spend time with her husband and two daughters. She also volunteers at her high school alma mater, Saint Basil Academy, by judging the annual school science fair.

In addition, she is an avid billiards player in the American Pool Association and enjoys taking part in competitions for the sport.

## Treat<sub>(ment)</sub> for your Tummy



### Waldorf Salad

*A sweet, creamy variation of the average fruit salad*

#### Ingredients

1/4 cup walnut halves  
3/4 cup non-fat yogurt  
2 tbsp light mayonnaise  
1 tsp ground nutmeg  
2 tsp maple syrup  
1/2 lemon, zest finely grated  
Freshly ground black pepper  
3 large, crisp apples, such as Gala  
4 ribs celery, sliced into 1/2-inch-thick pieces  
1 cup seedless red grapes, halved  
1/2 lemon, juiced  
1 head Boston lettuce

**Prep/cook time:** 25 minutes

**Makes:** 4 servings

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
2. Spread the nuts on a baking sheet and toast in oven for 8 to 10 minutes. Cool and break the nuts into small pieces. Set aside.
3. Whisk the yogurt, mayonnaise, maple syrup, lemon zest and nutmeg in a large bowl and season generously with pepper.
4. Halve, core and cut the apples into 3/4-inch pieces, leaving the skin intact.
5. Add the apples, celery and grapes to the bowl. Sprinkle the mix with the lemon juice and then, toss with the dressing.
6. Cover and refrigerate for at least one hour.
7. When ready to serve, toss the walnuts into the salad. Arrange lettuce leaves on a large platter, or divide among salad plates. Place the salad on the lettuce and serve.

**Welcome to our new staff members**

Apex would like to welcome and introduce some of our newest staff members. They include:

- Pat Colonna, physical therapist in Royersford
- John Vercher, physical therapist in Royersford
- Chip Cofone, physical therapist in Lafayette Hill
- Arleen Albert, receptionist in Lafayette Hill
- Alana Yost, receptionist in Royersford

**Community events**

Apex will be sponsoring a hole for the Michael Steadman Jr. Memorial Golf Tournament at Linfield National Golf Club in Linfield, Penn., on June 12, 2007. Michael, an armed forces veteran, was killed in a car accident in 1993. In his memory, his family and friends hold an annual golf tournament that benefits local scholarship funds.

Apex is excited to announce we will be sponsoring the Chalfont Challenge – one of seven races in the 2007 Bucks 5K Series – on June 9, 2007. Marsha Berger Grant of the Chalfont office and Kristen Gerhard of the billing department will be running in the race. The event will benefit Chalfont's park and trail development program.

Please join us for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life at Pottsgrove High School in Pottstown, PA from June 2-3, 2007. Anne Schutt of the Pottstown office and Pat Colonna of the Royersford office will join the team "Beth's Bumblebees" in raising money for cancer research.

**Thank you!!**

The entire Apex team would like to thank each and every patient who has referred their family, friends and complete strangers to our clinics. We sincerely appreciate your confidence and trust in us!

# Anatomy 101: Foot Fetish

*Plantar Fascia:* thick, connective tissue that supports the arch of the foot, running from the calcaneus (i.e. heel) to the metatarsal (i.e. toe) bones

*Area of pain caused by plantar fasciitis*

*Calcaneus:* largest bone in the human foot and anchor of the plantar fascia; otherwise known as the heel bone



Photo courtesy of MayoClinic.com

## Do it Right: Plantar Fascia Stretches

**Toe curls with towel**

Place a towel on the floor. Grab the towel with your toes and pull it toward you. Repeat this motion ten times, two sets for each foot. This exercise will help to strengthen the muscles in the arch of your foot.

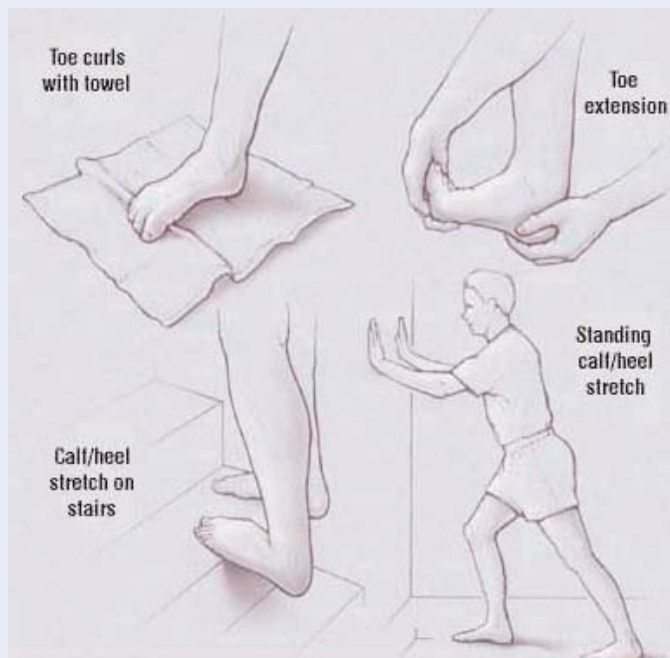


Photo courtesy of MayoClinic.com

**Toe extension**

While sitting, grasp your toes and gently pull them toward you until you feel a stretch in the arch of your foot. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat three times on each side.

**Calf/heel stretch on stairs**

Stand on a step near the bottom of your stairs. Put your weight on the ball of one foot and slowly lower that heel until you feel your calf muscle stretching. Hold for 30 seconds, three sets for each foot.

**Standing calf/heel stretch**

Stand as shown, with your back leg straight and heel down. Move your hips forward until you feel a stretch in your calf. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat three times on each side. Then, repeat this stretch sequence with your back knee slightly bent.

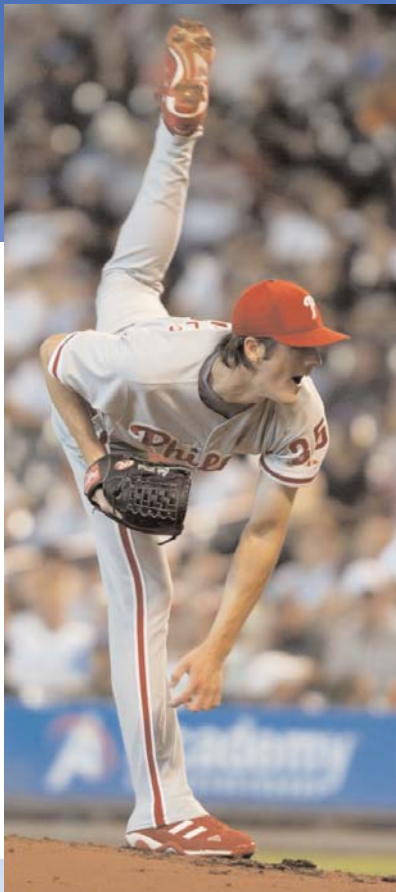


Photo courtesy of MLBlog.com

# Achieving the Apex

What patients are saying about their successes with our clinics

*"I was referred to Apex by my surgeon. His confidence was more than justified. Both my therapists were knowledgeable, considerate and very efficient. The location, their accomodating schedule and the general ambience of the facility all contributed to my 100 percent satisfaction. My surgeon discharged me yesterday - a full month ahead of my predicted six-month recovery. I'll now be able to renew participation in any activity I choose."*

– Melvyn B.

*"It is not a wonder your practice continues to grow and grow. I feel the quality of care and support that I received at Apex cannot be paralled by any other. My therapist was outstanding. The rest of your staff was very helpful and supportive too. Thanks for helping me recover."*

– Anne Z.

*"When I was referred to Apex, I was suffering from sciatica and had been in pain for some time. During my first visit, my therapist did a detailed evaluation and explained the program I'd be working on. Over the next month, I worked on a personalized exercise program that, after six weeks, has greatly improved my low back strength and alleviated much of my leg pain. My experience at Apex has been outstanding."*

– Anon.



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