How to treat it?

1. Sit on a chair. Place a towel on the floor and step on it.
2. Keep your toes flat while gripping the towel with the sole, then relax.
3. Repeat this movement 20 times.
4. Perform the exercise 20 times with the other foot.

Conclusion

Plantar fasciitis is a “work-related disease”. Although work is only one of the many risk factors in the development of the disease, the chance of getting this disease can be minimized by eliminating the health hazards at work or reducing their risks, and adopting appropriate preventive measures.

Occupational Health Clinics of the Labour Department

Kowloon Occupational Health Clinic
Telephone: 2343 7130
Fanning Occupational Health Clinic
Telephone: 2645 5701

Enquiries

For enquiries or advice on occupational health and hygiene matters, please contact the Occupational Safety and Health Branch of the Labour Department through:
Telephone: 2862 4064
Fax: 2861 2046
E-mail: enquiry@labour.gov.hk

Information on the services offered by the Labour Department and on major labour legislation can also be found on our website: www.labour.gov.hk

Complaints

If you have any complaints about unsafe workplace and practices, please call the Labour Departments Occupational Safety and Health Complaint Hotline at 2542 2172. All complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence.
What is plantar fasciitis?

It refers to the inflammation of the plantar fascia and the soft tissues around it due to injury or strain.

Causes:
- Personal factors e.g. overweight, flat feet, club foot etc.
- Standing at work or prolonged walking, thus stressing the foot
- Wearing inappropriate shoes for a long period of time e.g. body too tight, sole too hard or heel too high
- Other factors, e.g. increased stress on the foot due to frequent carrying of heavy objects

Signs and Symptoms
- Heel pain
  - Particularly significant when stepping out of bed in the morning
  - Worsens after prolonged standing or walking
- Redness, swelling or heat may be noticed at the affected part of the foot

Which occupations have a higher risk?
- Teachers, postmen, deliverymen and sales personnel, etc.

How to prevent it?

1. Avoid standing at work or prolonged walking
   - As far as reasonably practicable, provide a suitable work chair or a chair for occasional sitting at the working location for the employee standing at work
   - Flexible work arrangement allows employees to relieve lower knee fatigue
   - Arrange intermittent sitting for employees, such as 10-15 minutes break for 2-3 hours continuous standing work or perform low limb exercises

2. Reduce pressure on the foot
   - Avoid carrying heavy objects or use trolleys when needed
   - Reduce body weight as appropriate
   - Shock abosorbing mat could be used

3. Select suitable shoes
   - Preferred qualities
     - Comfortable and light weight
     - Soft soles with better shock absorption ability
     - Flat decreasing shock arising from walking
   - Appropiate insoles can be used, if necessary, to reduce pressure on the foot
   - Avoid wearing high-heeled shoes, for example, over 5 cm or 2 inches high

4. Suitable exercises
   - Calf muscles stretching exercise
     - Stand and place your hands on a wall. Bend your left leg and stretch your right leg backward with your toes pointing forward
   - Lean your body forward without raising the heels to stretch the calf muscles of the right leg. Hold for 10 seconds
   - Perform similar movements with the other leg
   - Repeat this exercise 5 times

   - Ankle exercise
     - Be seated. Raise one leg. Rotate your foot clockwise 10 times
     - Then rotate your foot anti-clockwise 10 times
     - Repeat the same movements 10 times each with the other leg

Introduction

Work and health are closely related. While our work could affect our health, our health could also affect our work.

According to the International Labour Organization, the relationship between work and disease can be classified into the following three categories:

1. Occupational diseases - have specific or strong relationship to the exposure to physical, chemical, biological or psychosocial factors in the workplace. These factors in the work environment are predominant and essential in the causation of the diseases, for example, infarction, arthrosis, occupational deafness, etc.

2. Work-related diseases - are multifactorial in origin, where factors in the work environment may play a role, together with other risk factors, in the development of such diseases, for example, plantar fasciitis, lower limb varicose vein, shoulder tendinitis, etc.

3. General diseases - are diseases affecting the working population. They do not have causal relationship with work but may be aggravated by occupational health hazards, for example, diabetes mellitus, gout, rheumatoid arthritis, etc.

This pamphlet introduces plantar fasciitis which is a common "work-related disease".