

Well-Heeled Footwear Advice to Help Avoid Pain



Sometimes heel pain can be aggravated due to the type of footwear worn. However, relieving the pain can be as simple as changing the type of shoes you wear! In a recent American Podiatric Medical Association survey, 45 percent of Americans attribute heel pain to wearing uncomfortable or ill-fitting shoes. Shoes that fail to give adequate support to the foot can increase strain on the largest ligament of the foot, known as the plantar fascia, resulting in inflammation, heel pain and possible injury. This inflammation to the plantar fascia is called plantar fasciitis—one of the most common causes of heel pain.

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Footwear Type	Problem	Solution
Athletic Shoe	Heel pain can occur while wearing athletic shoes—especially if the shoe has a worn heel or sole, or does not provide enough support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace shoes with excessive or uneven wear on soles and heels. Replace shoes every 350-500 miles. To test the support of the heel, press the sides and make sure they do not collapse.
Ballet Flat	This popular style of shoe can cause plantar fasciitis, Achilles tendon strain and an overall feeling of tiredness in the feet and legs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure the shoe doesn't bend too easily in the middle. Use an over-the-counter insert to provide support. Don't walk long distances in these shoes.
Slides or Mules	This type of shoe can cause plantar fasciitis and Achilles tendon strain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select a shoe that allows some bend at the ball of the foot. Avoid wearing this type of shoe for long periods of time. Refrain from wearing this shoe if you experience heel pain.
Flip-Flop	Surprisingly, this easy-to-wear shoe can lead to plantar fasciitis and Achilles tendon strain. Daily wear of flip-flops can also cause calluses in the heel area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select flip-flops made of natural materials such as soft, supple leather. The heel of your foot should not hang over the edge. Look for styles with a built-in arch.
Fashion Sneaker	This type of sneaker may cause plantar fasciitis due to the flexible sole and the lack of arch and heel support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure the sneakers have laces and the soles don't twist. Don't wear this shoe for exercise; it is not intended for athletic activities.

Foot pain is not normal! With early detection, heel pain can be treated with non-invasive treatment options. It typically is more difficult to successfully treat heel pain the longer it is left untreated. If you experience heel pain, see a podiatrist right away.

Visit www.apma.org/heelpain to find an APMA member podiatrist in your area.

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