

SENIOR HEALTH & FITNESS

Relieving the Pain of Plantar Fasciitis

By

Jim Evans

DEAR JIM: I've been a waitress for more than 30 years – I'm 68 now - so I'm on my feet most of the time. A few weeks ago my heel started to hurt. At first, I just thought it was a bruise, but I woke up one morning and it was so painful I could hardly stand up. My doctor diagnosed it as plantar fasciitis and prescribed rest and ibuprofen, but it is healing very slowly, and I am missing too many days of work. Are there any exercises I can do to help it heal faster and help me get back to work sooner? **PAIN IN THE FOOT IN PONTIAC**

DEAR PAIN IN THE FOOT: Plantar fasciitis (pronounced fashee-EYE-tis) is an inflammation of the tough, fibrous band of tissue (fascia) connecting your heel bone to the base of your toes – usually caused by overuse. Rest is usually the first treatment and the ibuprofen should help to reduce the inflammation, so your doctor is right on target.

According to the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, you are more likely to suffer from plantar fasciitis if you are a woman, if you are overweight, or if you have a job that requires a lot of walking or standing on hard surfaces. Tight calf muscles, flat feet, and high arches can also make you more prone to the condition.

There ARE some exercises you can do to stretch the Achilles tendon and the plantar fascia, but it sounds like you are anxious to return to work as soon as possible, so you might experience a continuing recurrence of the same problem just by the nature of your job. I would suggest that you might want to try a pair of Z-Coil shoes (www.zcoil.com) because of their remarkable ability to provide almost immediate relief and quick recovery time. I seldom recommend specific products or services in this column, but I have personally seen how these remarkable shoes have helped people find relief from plantar fasciitis, arthritis and joint pain, back pain, sciatica, heel spurs, and even general body fatigue. In fact, I wear Z-Coils myself to relieve the pain in my hips and knees from old athletic injuries.

You can wear Z-Coils to work as they are stable on even or uneven surfaces (in fact, you can even run in them), and the adjustable coil or “spring,” engineered around a rigid orthotic, provides maximum cushioning and pressure distribution on hard surfaces. You might have to get used to people staring at your strange-looking shoes, but it will be worth it if you can return to work pain-free.

Jim Evans is a 40-year veteran of the health and fitness industry and a nationally recognized consultant on fitness for seniors. He is also host of the popular radio talk show “Forever Young” on San Diego’s KCBQ 1170 AM (fyradio.com) focusing on issues of health, fitness, and quality of life.