



# HARVEY R. DANCIGER, DPM

Advanced Foot and Ankle Care

We provide comprehensive foot care services, but there are certain issues we see on a more frequent basis than others. At the top of the list of repeat offenders? **Heel pain.**

Heel pain is a very common problem for patients of all ages. Unlike some other foot problems, this one doesn't necessarily affect a certain group more than others. For example, bunions are most often seen in female patients and gout tends to affect men more than women. This is not the case with heel pain.

Let's take a quick look at why so many people develop heel pain, highlight some specific causes, and then identify potential components of your customized treatment plan.

## Why Heel Pain Is So Common

To understand why this problem affects so many people—from across all demographics—we need to start with the heel bone (calcaneus). This particular bone is fairly durable, but it is also the anchor point for a pair of frequently used soft tissues – the Achilles tendon and plantar fascia.

The Achilles tendon connects the bottom of the calf muscle to the back of the calcaneus. In doing so, it enables the foot to move up and down, depending on whether the calf muscle contracts or elongates. This particular tendon is the largest and strongest in the body, but that doesn't mean it's infallible.

The plantar fascia is a fibrous tissue spanning the length of the foot and connecting the bottom of the heel bone to the bottom of the forefoot. This connective tissue supports the arch and assists in absorbing shock when a foot lands while taking a step.

In addition to these two tissues—and you'll see how they come into a play in just a second—another key reason heel pain is common stems from the fact that your feet endure a tremendous amount of force with every step. In fact, the landing foot sustains a force load of up to twice your bodyweight per step when you walk – and that number jumps as high as four times your weight per step when you run!



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74000 Country Club Dr, Ste A-2  
Palm Desert, CA 92260  
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## Specific Causes of Heel Pain

Those connective tissues and force loads contribute to some specific injuries and conditions responsible for causing heel pain, including:

### 01 ACHILLES TENDINITIS

When the Achilles tendon is injured on account of overuse, it becomes inflamed and painful. The pain is typically strongest during (or immediately following) physical activity and can be felt in the back of the heel.

### 02 PLANTAR FASCIITIS

If it is the plantar fascia that becomes injured, pain is generally most severe with the first steps of the day (or after extended periods of rest). The reason for this is because the fascia develops tiny tears from the physical trauma. During periods of rest, the body works to repair those tears. If you take steps before it is completely healed, the tears rip back open – which causes sharp pain.

Whereas Achilles tendinitis is felt in the back of the heel, plantar fasciitis is felt on the bottom.

### 03 SEVER'S DISEASE

For preteens and adolescents, the most common source of heel pain is Sever's disease (more formally known as calcaneal apophysitis).

In this condition—which is not actually a disease at all—a specific growth plate found in the back of the heel reaches physical maturity before the Achilles tendon. This causes tension within the Achilles, specifically at the point where it connects to the calcaneus. As with Achilles tendinitis, the pain is usually strongest during physical activity.

There are other potential causes of heel pain—bursitis, heel spurs, etc.—but these ones are the most common.

MEET YOUR DOCTOR

DR. HARVEY DANCIGER



Dr. Harvey R. Danciger's practice is founded on three basic principles: trust, caring and a commitment to excellence in podiatry.

We view each patient as an individual. We view our relationship with our patients as a sacred trust and work hard everyday to deserve that trust. Patients come first!

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## Heel Pain Treatment Options

Whereas they have different root causes and are felt at different times and in different areas of the heel, all of these conditions have one thing in common – they cause pain and need to be treated.

Now, Sever's disease is actually more of a growing pain than an injury. In this case, the condition will actually resolve itself over time. Until it does, however, treatment is still beneficial for addressing present symptoms.

For Achilles tendinitis and plantar fasciitis, the goal is to both provide pain relief and make sure the condition actually improves.

Heel pain treatment will vary, depending on the condition and patient being treated, but may consist of:

### RICE THERAPY

Rest, ice, compression, and elevation work to prevent further injury, relieve pain, and reduce swelling. This is often a starting point and key element of first aid.

### MEDICATION

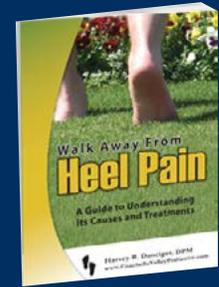
Most sources of heel pain benefit from nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) medications, which both relieve pain and control inflammation. Before taking any OTC medication, touch base with our office for appropriate dosage recommendations.

### ORTHOTIC THERAPY

Some cases of heel pain develop on account of biomechanical abnormalities that can be controlled with a pair of **custom orthotics**. These are versatile medical devices that work with your unique foot structure and gait pattern.

### LASER THERAPY

**This is an advanced treatment method** that uses concentrated light energy from lasers to stimulate and enhance natural healing processes at the cellular level. This process is completely safe, contributes to faster healing times, and reduces pain.



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CHANGED  
MY LIFE. ”

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*We hope that you don't have to deal with heel pain in the first place, but we also know this is a very common problem. If it's something you are experiencing, remember that A) it's not normal and B) ignoring it can lead to bigger problems down the road.*

*If you have pain in the back of your foot, we can help! Contact our Coachella Valley office today and request an appointment by calling (760) 568-0108!*

## Sudoku

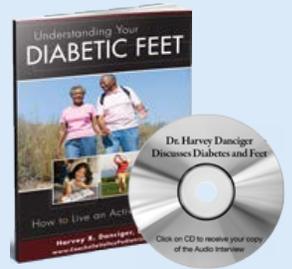
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