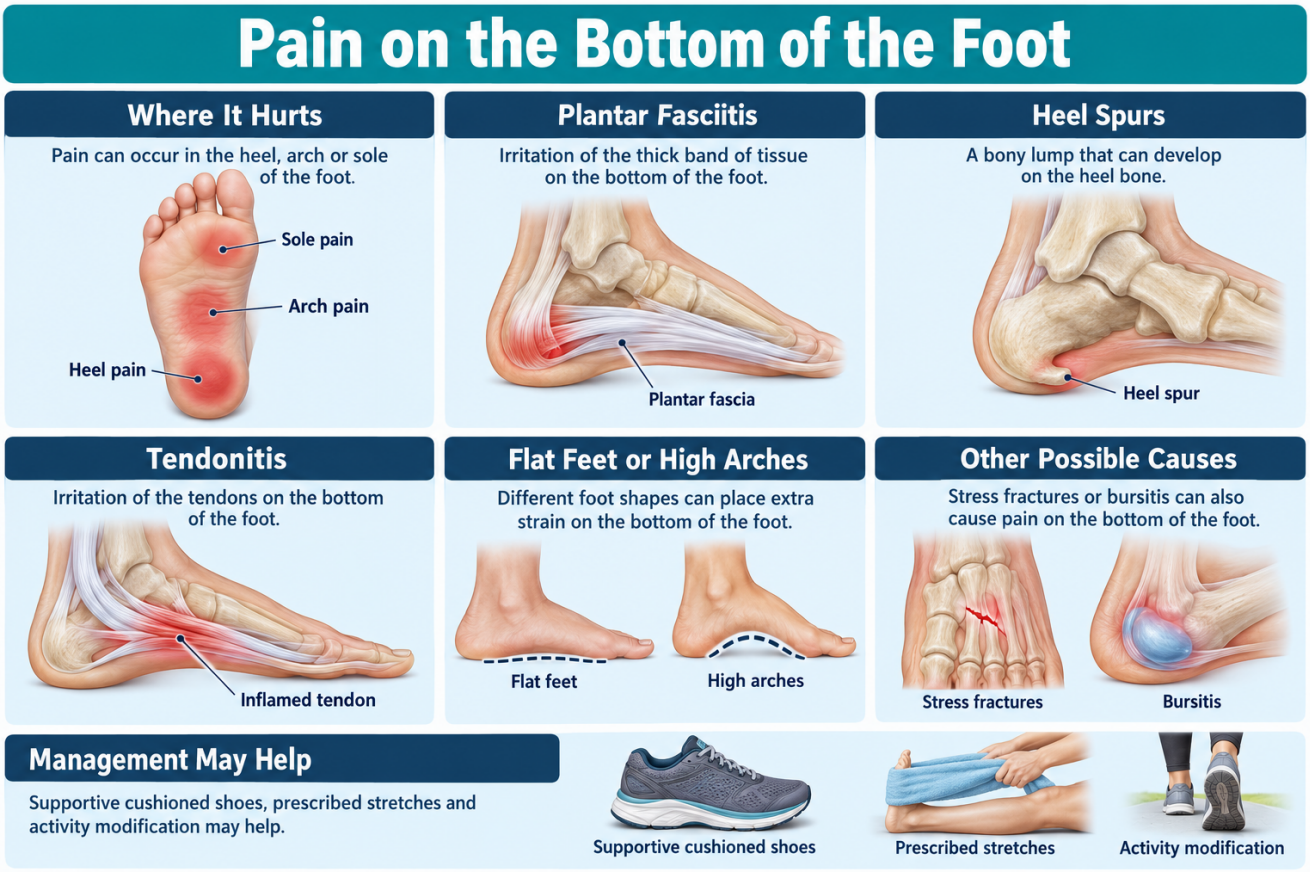
Pain on the Bottom of the Foot

Understanding symptoms, treatment and recovery

Pain on the Bottom of the Foot

A guide to symptoms, treatment and recovery



Understanding pain on the bottom of the foot

Pain on the bottom (sole) of the foot can occur due to overuse, injury, or underlying conditions affecting muscles, tendons, ligaments, or bones. The heel and arch are commonly affected.

Supporting your recovery

Supportive cushioned shoes, plantar fascia and calf stretches, and changes to painful activities may help. Heel pads or orthotics can reduce pressure on painful areas.

Causes and symptoms

Understanding what may be contributing to your pain

Common causes

- Plantar fasciitis - inflammation of the plantar fascia, often causing heel pain
- Heel spurs - bony growths at the heel
- Tendonitis - inflammation of tendons supporting the arch
- Flat feet or high arches - abnormal foot mechanics
- Stress fractures - small cracks in the bones of the foot
- Bursitis - inflammation of small fluid-filled sacs under the heel or ball of the foot

Who may be affected?

- Adults who stand or walk for long periods
- Runners and athletes
- People who are overweight
- Individuals with foot structure issues (flat feet, high arches)

Common symptoms

- Pain in the heel, arch, or sole
- Tenderness on touching the bottom of the foot
- Pain when first standing in the morning
- Swelling or stiffness in the foot
- Pain during walking, running, or after long periods of standing

Important information

- Pain does not improve after 2-3 weeks of self-care
- Severe swelling, bruising, or deformity
- Difficulty walking or performing daily activities
- Persistent or worsening pain

Recovery outlook

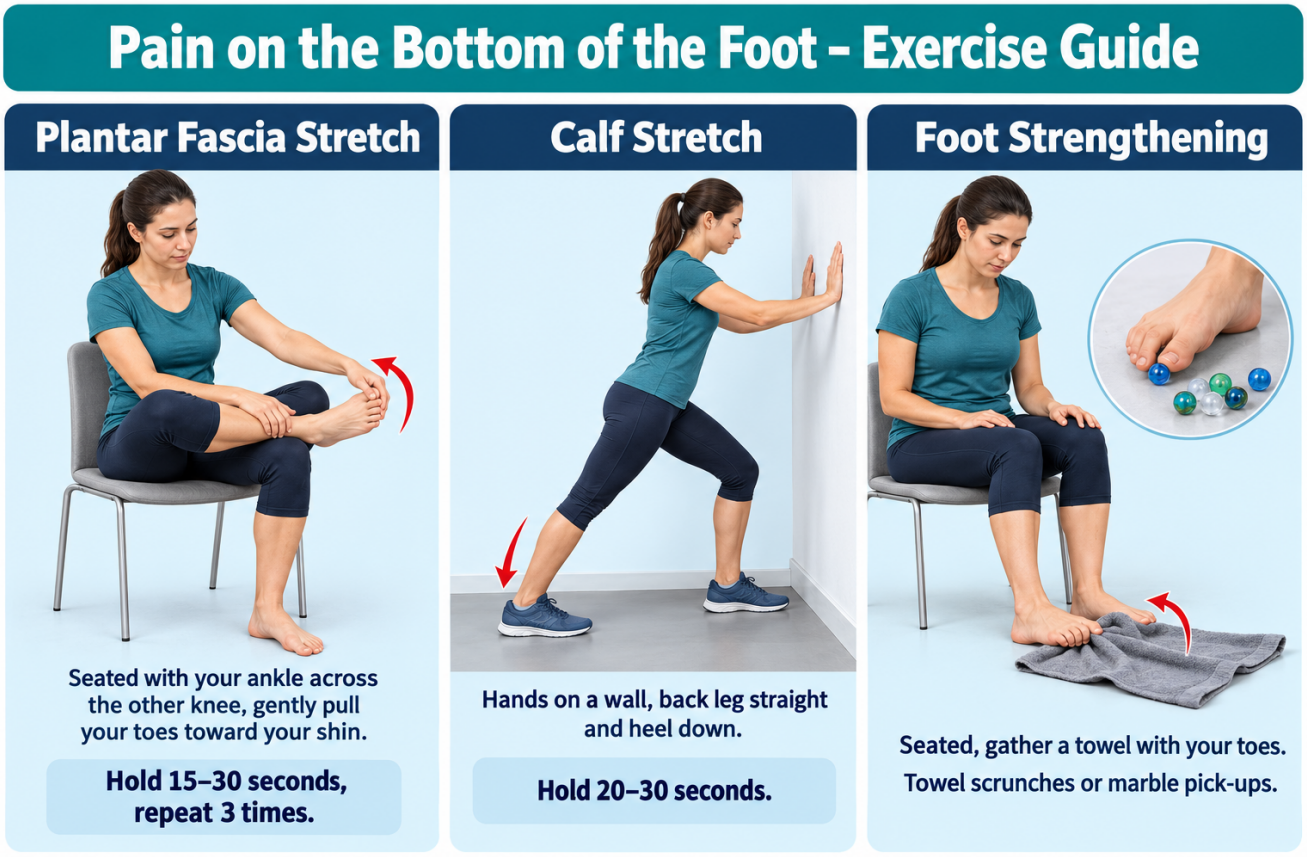
Most pain at the bottom of the foot improves with conservative care over a few weeks to months. Early treatment and following exercises reduce the risk of chronic pain.

Exercises and rehabilitation

Gentle movements under professional guidance

Exercise examples

Ask your physiotherapist which exercises are suitable for you. Use controlled movements and work within comfort.



Exercise instructions

1. Plantar Fascia Stretch: Sit, cross affected leg, pull toes toward shin, hold 15-30 seconds, repeat 3 times
2. Calf Stretch: Lean against a wall, back leg straight, heel on the ground, hold 20- 30 seconds
3. Foot Strengthening: Towel scrunches or marble pick-ups with toes

Recovery guidance

Most pain at the bottom of the foot improves with conservative care over a few weeks to months. Early treatment and following exercises reduce the risk of chronic pain.

Management and next steps

Self-care, treatment and when to seek help

Self-care and home management

- Rest - reduce activities that aggravate the pain
- Ice therapy - 10-15 minutes, 2-3 times daily
- Footwear - wear supportive shoes with cushioning
- Stretching exercises - plantar fascia and calf stretches
- Heel pads or orthotics - reduce pressure on the painful area
- Pain relief - paracetamol or NSAIDs if safe for you

Treatment physiotherapists may offer

- Hands-on treatment: massage, mobilization, stretching
- Exercise programs for strengthening and flexibility
- Advice on footwear, orthotics, and activity modification
- Taping or splints to support and reduce pressure

Questions or concerns?

- Pain does not improve after 2-3 weeks of self-care
- Severe swelling, bruising, or deformity
- Difficulty walking or performing daily activities
- Persistent or worsening pain

References

- NHS - Foot Pain: www.nhs.uk/conditions/foot-pain
- Chartered Society of Physiotherapy - Foot & Ankle Guidance

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