

**THE
10
BEST**

STRATEGIES FOR RUNNING WITHOUT HEEL PAIN

**Helpful Whether You're A
Beginner Or A Seasoned Pro!**



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About the Author Alex Gometz

Alex Gometz earned his Doctorate Degree in Physical Therapy amidst continuous involvement in triathlon training and competition. He knows firsthand, as a fellow runner, what it means to miss a day of training because of pain or injury. Besides his advanced degree in sports injury treatment and prevention he is a certified running gait specialist, certified distance running coach and USATF coach. He has worked with both professional and recreational runners to help them prevent and treat injuries that come with a repetitive but rewarding activity.



Introduction

From my experience, as an athlete with my own fair share of injuries and from working with several runners that have battled plantar heel pain, I want to share these tips with you to get you started on your way to feeling better. Every one responds differently as I learned over the years so I cannot tell you which of these will work best for you. Sometimes a combination is what does.

I know you are up for a challenge, so here it is: Consistency is the key to success with this condition. Take the time to try out at least one of these strategies. You will be pleasantly surprised by how much better you will feel.

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1. Sleep with a night splint

Many people describe their heel pain as being worse in the morning, especially the first few steps out of bed. This is because the ankle often rests in a position with toes pointed downward, which also tightens and stiffens the tissues through the arch and in the bottom of the foot. A night splint prevents your foot from resting for several hours in this position, often relieving the pain experienced within the first few morning steps.

2. Circles before getting out of bed

It is very important to reduce those first few painful steps by warming the feet up before stepping down onto them to walk. Perform 10 circles with toes going outward to help loosen the tissue that has stiffened overnight. You can draw the alphabet if you prefer, but get the ankle and foot moving before it has to sustain added pressures.

3. Don't walk or run barefoot, not even in doors

Protection is the key word while your heel is hurting, it needs protection to allow proper healing. Imagine a cut that is healing on your knee. Every time you bend your knee it stretches the area and the cut begins to break open and bleed. It takes noticeably longer for the cut to heal than one located in an area that isn't always stretched. That is similar to what

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occurs as the tendon in your foot meets the heel bone. The bottom of the foot becomes so tight that the tendon begins to pull away from its attachment at the bone, creating small cumulative trauma that delays the healing process. An appropriate shoe can reduce continued stretching of the ligament on the bottom of your foot and prevent your condition from worsening. Decreasing pressure on the area by reducing running loads, Weight bearing passive stretches will irritate the tendon attachment. Lastly and promoting non-stressing motion to increase circulation.

4. Substitute junk mileage with cross training

A lot of runners get caught up in mileage. Sometimes It's important to recognize that added mileage is not always the best choice when you are fighting injury. Often the payback is not worth the extra damage, and another means of cross training can be just as effective, if not more beneficial if it means that it allows you to heal faster and run uninhibited. Reduce mileage on warm up and/or cool downs, and substitute 1-2 easy runs during the week for a swim or elliptical session instead. This can take the impact off of your painful heel. You can monitor your effort with a heart rate monitor to make sure you are reaching an effort comparable to your intended run for the day.

Higher intensity workouts can also be replicated in this same manner while your foot heals.

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5. Avoid running hills and uneven surfaces

Running uphill causes more stress to the lower leg and foot and requires more work on your calf and small foot muscles. While strengthening these muscles may be beneficial, hill running is not the best way to achieve these strength gains. Instead, running hills may overstretch the area and create more harm and slow down the healing process. Keep your runs flat and do your best to control your training program by following the next step.

6. Wear supportive shoes - Skip the flats and slippers

A proper arch support is essential to allow the tissues in the bottom of the foot to heal. You know not to go barefoot, but don't just wear any old shoe. It is extremely important to have a good fitting, supportive shoe to position your foot in a way that does not cause extra stress throughout the day. Wearing flats shoe or flip flops when you have heel pain is like going hiking in heels. It doesn't provide protection to your foot in the given circumstances and will likely cause further damage. A physical therapist that has experience working with runners can help determine if a shoe is appropriate for you. But in the meantime, make sure that it is comfortable, the right size, and not super flimsy.

7. Avoid standing still for prolonged periods of time

Whether you are sitting or standing, it is important to keep the ankle and foot moving to reduce stiffness. Keep moving, and if you have to stay in

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one place for greater than 20 minutes, be sure to move your ankle up and down or in circles to keep it from getting stiff, in fact constant movement is one of the Ayrseyrehab principals of injury prevention. Pop your shoe off and roll your arch if you have time. Standing still for long periods of time increases stiffness in your foot (and your whole body), which usually means an increase in discomfort when you go to move again.

8. Daily roll and stretch routine at the end of day

Don't skip this one. It is important to keep tissues from stiffening up, and this extends beyond just the painful area. Rolling your calf and hamstring with a tennis or lacrosse ball through the several times per day can be beneficial.

9. Ice, after runs and ice baths before bed

Though rest is recommended, runners tend to run through nagging discomforts like plantar heel pain. If that's the case, be sure, be sure to spend 10 minutes after each run and before bed ice bath the bottom of, in and out of the bucket. This will help alleviate pain in the area and stimulate the healing process as the drastic change in temperature will make the body increase local circulation crucial to healing.

10. Schedule a physical therapy appointment

Physical therapy is the fastest way to eliminate heel pain among runners and get you back to doing what you love-crushing miles. A therapist that

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utilizes skilled manual therapy techniques can help loosen the stiff areas and strengthen the weak spots without having to visit a physician's office or consider non-conservative methods like surgery.

Bonus Section

11. Consider a running gait analysis performed by a PT

A running gait analysis performed by a qualified physical therapist can be a valuable aspect of your rehab program. At Advanced Therapy and Performance, this will likely be included over the course of your treatment sessions. While a standard evaluation by a physical therapist is critical to determine deficits or imbalances which may be contributing to the problem, a gait analysis allows a real live look at exactly how you move during running. Slow motion software allows the therapist to break down each phase of gait to identify areas which can be improved through specific exercises or gait retraining.

12. Strengthen the small muscles in your foot

While this is very important, it's in the bonus section because it's best implemented through the guidance of a physical therapist. Strengthening of the lower leg and foot (and up into the glutes) is often necessary, but best prescribed after a thorough evaluation, and best explained via demonstration.

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Conclusion

10 great and effective steps for running without heel pain (plus two bonus steps) that you can start TODAY. I can go more in depth on ways to run without pain than just the guidelines I've given you here, but these are the basics. If you apply them rigorously and are disciplined, they will make a huge difference.

Wishing you happy and pain-free miles,

Alex Gometz, DPT, CIC,

Leading US Physical Therapist

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Why Not Come In For **FREE**?

“Did You Know We Are Offering FREE 20-Minute Discovery Consultations?” A FREE Discovery Consultation will help you better understand your injury and how we can help you RECOVER.

A FREE 20-Minute Discovery Consultation with our back specialists would help you BETTER decide if physical therapy is right for you. We set time aside EVERY DAY to listen to patients’ questions and provide simple and easy to understand answers. Our goal is to get you on the road to recovery immediately.

If you’ve recognized you need help, but don’t know where to start, then reaching out to a Physical Therapist for FREE is the next step. You will be giving yourself the knowledge required in this ever-changing medical world. Let me and my physical therapists explain to you WHY you are hurting and HOW we can help you.

In your Free Consultation you can expect to learn:

- What causes your pain?
- How we can specifically help your injury?
- What is your unique treatment plan?
- How long will it take?
- What simple exercises you can do?
- Why do our patients LOVE us and keep returning?

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i Health Advice Disclaimer

We make every effort to ensure that we accurately represent the injury advice and prognosis displayed throughout this Guide.

However, examples of injuries and their prognosis are based on typical representations of those injuries that we commonly see in our physical therapy clinics. The information given is not intended as representations of every individual's potential injury. As with any injury, each person's symptoms can vary widely and each person's recovery from injury can also vary depending upon background, genetics, previous medical history, application of exercises, posture, motivation to follow physical therapist advice and various other physical factors.

It is impossible to give a 100% complete accurate diagnosis and prognosis without a thorough physical examination and likewise the advice given for management of an injury cannot be deemed fully accurate in the absence of this examination from one of the Licensed Physical Therapist at Ayrseyrehab.

We are able to offer you this service at a standard charge. Significant injury risk is possible if you do not follow due diligence and seek suitable professional advice about your injury. No guarantees of specific results are expressly made or implied in this report.