



In This Issue

- New Year, New You
- Ankle Sprains
- Heel Pain
- Achilles Tendonitis

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Welcome...

Welcome to **Footwise**, the newsletter from your friendly Podiatry & Foot Care team at 'A Foot Above®'. HAPPY NEW YEAR!

New Year, New YOU!

As we welcome in 2012 with our New Year's Resolutions to lose weight, keep fit and join the gym, this may come as a shock to your feet, knees, hips and back. Any sudden increase in activity after a period of rest can cause a lot of stress and strain on your body.

Soon after New Year, the Professional Foot Healthcare teams at **A Foot Above®** often see an increase in customers with issues such as heel, Achilles tendon and shin pain, as well as many other lower limb sports related injuries.

The majority of these injuries may be avoided by:

- Gradually building up the time and intensity of your workout as well as having a day of rest in-between.
- Doing the correct warm up and cool down before and after your workout to ensure your muscles are warm, enabling you to carry out your exercise regime with less risk of strains or "pulled-muscles".
- These injuries may also be prevented by ensuring you are wearing the correct footwear. For example, sports shoes with an insole that supports your arches and cushions at the heel. These insoles can be custom made to the shape of your foot for much more accurate support. Just ask any of our Podiatrists and Foot Healthcare professionals at your **A Foot Above®** clinic and they will be happy to help you with your insoles.
- If you have not done much or any exercise before or have existing illness, ensure you consult your GP as they will be able to advise you on how to start out on an exercise regime that is best suited for you.

Ankle Sprains

With those New Year's Resolutions set, as you increase your activity level it can often lead to problems with our feet and ankles; particularly ankle sprains. Most of us have twisted an ankle at some point, either while doing something as simple as stepping off a curb, or while enjoying a specific sport such as tennis or running. However, sometimes these "twists" may be quite serious and need to be treated as quickly as possible.

If your ankle becomes swollen, painful or bruised after you injure it, you have most likely sprained your ankle. This means you have probably stretched and possibly torn the ligaments in your ankle.

First, if an injury or accident does occur, the steps you can take to help yourself are easy to remember if you can recall the word "**RICE**".

- **REST** - Restrict your activity and get off your foot/ankle.
- **ICE** - Gently place a plastic bag of ice wrapped in a towel on the injured area in a 20-minute-on, 40-minute-off cycle.
- **COMPRESSION** - Lightly wrap an elasticated bandage around the area, taking care not to pull it too tight.
- **ELEVATION** - To reduce swelling and pain, sit in a position that allows you to elevate the foot/ankle higher than your heart.

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Heel Pain

The most common cause of heel pain when suddenly starting a new exercise regime is a condition called **Plantar Fasciitis**. This is an over-use injury of the plantar fascia, which is a band of tissue that inserts into the heel bone and runs under the arch of your foot to the toes.

This can become painful when the foot has poor structure, for example when it “overpronates” (inwardly rotates from the collapse of the arch) from not having the correct support, causing the muscle to over stretch and pull against the bone. Having a high-arched foot with reduced shock-absorbing qualities may cause the plantar fascia band of tissue to be tight and inflamed..

This creates a lot of inflammation and tenderness to the heel. The most common symptoms of Plantar Fasciitis are:

- Pain on the bottom of the heel
- Pain that is usually worse upon weight-bearing
- Pain that increases over a period of months
- Pain may appear worse after periods of rest (first thing in the morning) or after sitting for long periods of time.
- For some, the pain subsides but returns after spending long periods of time on their feet.



An effective way to treat this problem is with insoles that support the arch and stop the foot from overpronating. These insoles, or **orthotics**, support the high arched foot type. This support will reduce the stress and strain through the plantar fascia band of tissue, reducing inflammation and pain.

Achilles Tendonitis

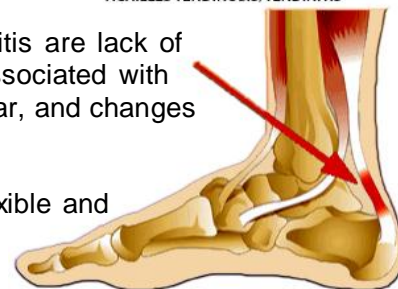
Achilles tendonitis is a common problem when starting out on a new exercise regime. This is a condition of irritation and inflammation of the large tendon in the back of the ankle. Overuse of the Achilles tendon can cause inflammation and can lead to pain and swelling. This pain is most prominent in the area about 2-4cm above the heel where the tendon attaches. Achilles tendonitis pain is most commonly associated with exercise that involves forcibly pushing off or jumping.

Two most common causes of Achilles tendonitis are lack of flexibility and overpronation. Other factors associated with Achilles tendonitis are recent change in footwear, and changes in exercise training schedules.

As people get older, tendons become less flexible and more rigid and therefore more susceptible to injury. This means middle-aged recreational athletes are most susceptible to Achilles Tendonitis.

Treatment for Achilles tendonitis begins with resting the tendon to allow the inflammation to settle down. In more severe cases adequate rest may require crutches or immobilization of the ankle. Other treatments include, ice therapy, orthotic therapy, a course of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications and even surgery in the most severe cases. Visit your local **A Foot Above®** clinic for professional Foot Healthcare advice.

ACHILLES TENDINOSIS/TENDINITIS



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