



# Ask the Doctor

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY LOCAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROFESSIONALS.

## ASK THE DOCTOR

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### **Q. I'M A COMPETITIVE RUNNER AND HAVE TERRIBLE PAIN IN MY LEFT HEEL. WHAT CAN I DO?**

**A.** Runners tend to suffer from one of two types of heel pain. The most common is plantar fasciitis, which is pain on the bottom surface (plantar) of the heel. The second most common is Achilles tendonitis, which is pain on the back part (or posterior) of the heel. The first line of attack for either type is to stop all activity that exacerbates pain, so take a break from running to let your body heal. In the meantime, you can switch to low-impact activities like cycling, core strengthening, upper body lifting, modified rowing, and/or aqua jogging - a form of deep water running that closely mimics the actual running movement. Other first line treatments include:

- Stretches - begin focused stretching on the plantar fascia and Achilles tendon
- Pain meds - take a short-course of NSAID (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory) medicines such as ibuprofen or naproxen
- Massage - perform a deep tissue massage on your calf muscle and bottom of your foot using a lacrosse ball or frozen water bottle
- Added support - visit a running-specific shoe store to improve your footwear and ensure you have proper arch support

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Most cases of heel pain will resolve within three to six months after beginning conservative treatment. If your pain persists, seek the advice of an expert.