

Plantar Fascia Release

INTRODUCTION

The plantar fascia is a thick band of connective tissue on the sole of the foot that helps hold your arch up. Plantar fasciitis is irritation or inflammation of the fascia, and is caused by repetitive stress or excessive tension on the plantar fascia. Small tears can also develop in this tissue. Whilst more than 90% of patients will get better with conservative treatments, surgery to release the plantar fascia is an effective treatment for patients with chronic plantar fasciitis. Dr Zilko uses an endoscopic (keyhole surgery) technique to release the plantar fascia.

THE SURGERY

Endoscopic plantar fascia release involves a number of steps:

- General anaesthetic and IV antibiotics
- Tourniquet around the thigh
- Two small incisions (~6mm), one over each side of the heel
- Insertion of arthroscope (camera) and a keyhole surgery hook-blade
- Release of the plantar fascia under direct vision
- Closure of incisions with sutures
- Local anaesthetic block
- Surgical camboot (VACOCast)

GUIDELINES FOR POST-OP RECOVERY

HOSPITAL ADMISSION

- Patients go home on the day of surgery

FIRST 2 WEEKS

- Elevate foot and rest
- NON-WEIGHTBEARING only for the first 3 days, then FULL weightbearing as tolerated in the surgical boot
- Mobilise with crutches for balance and support
- Surgical boot on at all times, including in bed and shower, except for the following exercises:
 - From day 3, come out of the boot 2 times a day for gentle ankle and toe flexion & extension exercises
- Dressings to stay dry and intact
- Strong painkillers as required
- Anti-inflammatory tablets as prescribed

2 WEEK POST-OP APPOINTMENT

- Review by Dr Zilko and nurse for removal of dressings and sutures

WEEKS 3-6

- Once comfortably full weightbearing in the boot, can transition to normal supportive shoes (eg trainers/running shoes)
- Elevate foot when not walking
- Daily scar massage from 3 weeks post-op
- Podiatry review (arrange first appointment for 2-5 days after the 2-week post-op check)
- **PODIATRY: Foot & Ankle Rehabilitation Centre**
 - Paraffin therapy, joint mobilisation, cold laser, soft tissue manipulation and nerve desensitisation
 - Plantar fascia and Achilles stretching and massage
 - Foot intrinsic muscle strengthening
 - Gait re-training

FROM 6 WEEKS

- Return to most normal activities as tolerated

Full recovery is usually 3-6 months.

Every patient's recovery is individual and depends on the severity of the injury/disease and complexity of the surgery.