What Is a Heel Spur?

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Why Do You Have Pain Associated With Heel Spurs?

Heel spurs, medically known as “heel spur syndrome” are bony protrusions caused by a deposit of calcium on the underside of the heel bone. Heel spurs can be painless, but sometimes are associated with intense pain.

Is not the heel spur itself that causes pain, but rather the inflammation of the surrounding soft tissue. This happens more often while walking, jogging or running. Pain may also be triggered by plantar fasciitis, a condition that involves inflammation of the connective tissue (called plantar fascia) that links the heel bone to the ball of the foot. Plantar fasciitis is often associated with heel spurs.

The pain is worse in the morning when you get out of bed and stand up, and can feel like a knife or pins in the bottom of your feet. Later on it turns into a less intense, dull ache that can become again sharp if you sit for a long time, and stand up again.

What causes a heel spur?

Heel spurs are often seen in athletes and fitness enthusiasts because they are triggered by repetitive strains on the muscles and ligaments of the foot. Activities like jogging, running and jumping are the most commonly linked with heel spurs.

Bad, poorly fitted shoes that don’t provide enough support to the foot arch can also cause this condition. Of course, being overweight or obese would also put extra pressure on your heel and therefore is increasing your risk to develop heel spurs.

Spending lots of time standing on the feet, abnormal arch (either flat or too high), diabetes and advanced age are risk factors for developing plantar fasciitis.

How to avoid pain from heel spurs?

If the pain is intense and lasts more than four weeks, you should seek medical treatment. Treatment usually involves conservative measures such as stretching exercises and a customized physio therapy plan.

Special shoes are also recommended, with shoe inserts or orthotics.

A healthcare provider can also use taping or strapping to help your muscles and tendons rest and decrease the inflammation of the heel.