

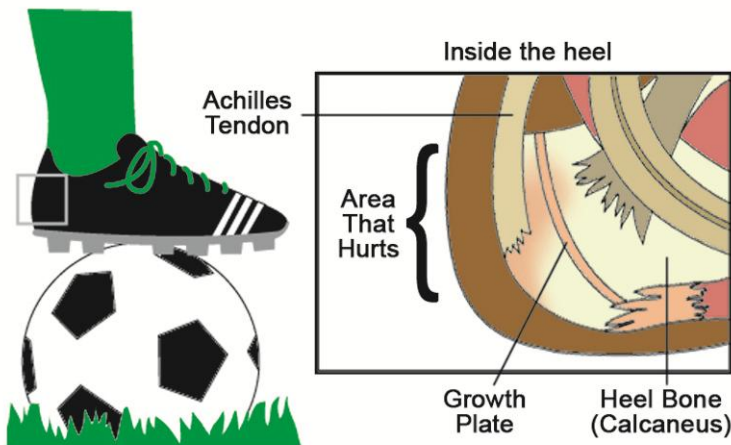


Royal Manchester Children's Hospital Paediatric Emergency Department

Information for Patients and Carers

Sever's Disease

Calcaneal apophysitis



Your child's heel pain is caused by Sever's disease.

This is when the Achilles tendon at the back of the ankle is tight and pulls on the growth plate. This especially occurs in active children during growth spurts, as bones grow faster than muscles.

This causes pain at the back of the heel on one or both sides, and sometimes swelling. The pain is worse after exercise. The following will help reduce the swelling and pain:

1. **Rest** – Your child may need to take a short break from sport if their pain is severe. Exercise will make the pain worse, but it will not do any permanent damage. Avoid running and jumping until they can walk without any pain. They might feel more comfortable in supportive footwear with a well cushioned heel. Gel heel shoe inserts may also help.
2. **Ice** – Crushed ice or frozen peas wrapped in a towel to the area when sore.
3. **Painkillers** - Your child can take appropriate doses of **paracetamol or ibuprofen** (widely available from pharmacies and supermarkets) to help with any pain.
4. **Stretches** – this will help to loosen the Gastrocnemius and Soleus muscles (calf muscles) so they don't pull so tightly on your heel. See the back of this leaflet for more guidance.

The pain usually goes away completely within a few weeks and so your child does not need any hospital follow-up. They might get further pain in the future, but eventually they will grow out of it completely once their bones stop growing.

Useful contacts

If your child is experiencing any significant pain or if you have any concerns or would like more advice about your child's injury, please telephone your GP. For an emergency that cannot wait until the next working day please contact the Paediatric Emergency Department on 0161 701 9102.



Stretches:

Try these stretches at home before exercise or when you are not in pain. Hold each stretch for 30 seconds and repeat three times. Aim for three times a day.

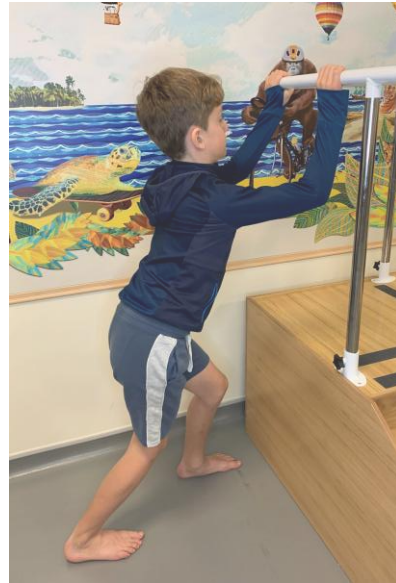
Gastrocnemius stretch:

Leaning against a wall, place one foot in front of the other. Keep your back leg straight with the heel on the floor and bend your front knee. You should feel this stretch in your calf.



Soleus stretch:

In the same position as you were in for the Gastrocnemius stretch and keeping your heels on the floor, this time bend both knees. You should feel this stretch lower down in your calf.



Plantar Fascia stretch:

Stand with your toes up against a wall pointing upwards and lean forwards. You should feel this stretch in both your calf muscle and underneath the sole of your foot.



Heel dips:

Standing on a bottom step and holding on to a handrail, stand with your toes on the step and your heels hanging off the edge of the step. Slowly drop your heels down. You should feel this stretch in your calf.

