



THE BODY SHOP » JIM & PHIL WHARTON

WHERE RUNNERS GO TO GET STRONG AND STAY INJURY-FREE

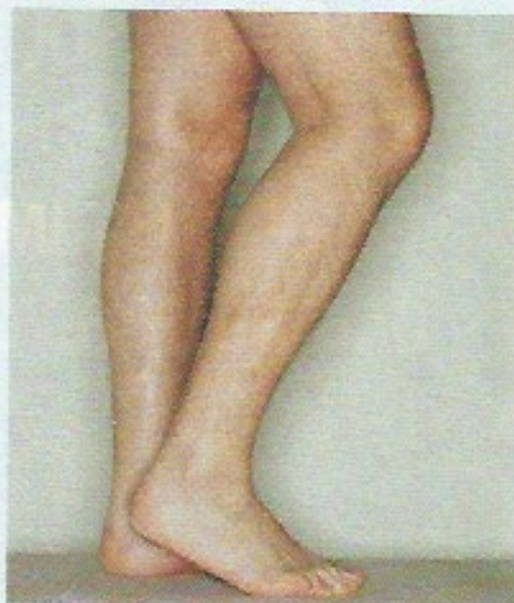
Runners' Remedies

PRESCRIPTIONS FOR
WHATEVER AILS YOU
THIS MONTH: HEEL AND ARCH PAIN

THE ONLY THING RUNNERS RELY ON more than their lungs is their feet. And that's why plantar fasciitis, the inflammation of the tissue that stretches from the heel to the toes, is one of the most dreaded running injuries. The plantar fascia has a big job: It stabilizes the foot joints upon impact, acts as a shock absorber for the leg, and lifts the arch of the foot during the "takeoff" phase. But the repetitive stress of running can lead to microtearing in this connective tissue, causing pain in the heel and arch of the foot that often plagues runners for weeks (sometimes even longer). We believe that a major cause of plantar fasciitis is neglect. You might spend time in the weight room, but do you ever focus on your arches? Probably not. Here's a simple workout you can do while sitting at a desk or watching TV. We recommend all runners—those who currently have plantar fasciitis, those who've had it in the past, and those whom it could strike next—do these arch-strengthening exercises on both feet two or three times a week.



Can Lift: Put a one-pound can in the toe of a tube sock. Sit down. Rest your heel on the edge of the chair. Wrap or tie the sock around your foot with the weight between your big and second toe. Keep your heel on the seat. Grip the sock with your toes and lift and lower 10 times.



Towel Drag: Take a one-pound can and put it on the far end of a towel on the floor. Sit at the other end of the towel and put your heel on its edge. Grip the towel in your toes and bunch it up, pulling the can toward you. Keep gripping and bunching until you have moved the can all the way across.

MYTH BUSTER

» I have plantar fasciitis, so I need to get orthotics.

While orthotics can be effective at correcting biomechanical imbalances, don't assume you need them for the treatment of plantar fasciitis. Runners looking for a fast fix will be happy—orthotics will provide temporary relief. But they aren't a long-term solution. If your plantar fasciitis is the result of overtraining, weak arches, tight calves, or worn-out shoes (all potential causes), you need to get to the root of those problems. Low-cost, long-term, at-home remedies (including icing, rest, strengthening, and stretching) are the best permanent solution. Plus, adding more strengthening and stretching exercises (find them at runnersworld.com/whartons) to your routine will make your body more balanced and efficient, which can have a positive impact on your overall running performance.

Visit whartonperformance.com or e-mail whartons@rodale.com.



toolbox

Ice can relieve inflammation of the plantar fascia. But square ice packs aren't a great fit for the arch of your foot. A frozen water bottle is a much better fix. If you have plantar fasciitis, freeze a plastic water bottle, put it on the floor, and roll your foot (wear a sock) over it for 15 to 20 minutes four or five times a day.



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HEAD-TO-TOE HELP FROM INJURY-PREVENTION PROS

Bare Feat

Strength train shoeless to prevent injuries

BAREFOOT RUNNING IS a hot topic in running circles these days. Even if you have no intention of ever parting with your cushy soles, you'll still benefit from shoeless strength training. Barefoot training develops the muscles of the toes, midfoot, heel, and ankle—26 muscles in all—that get a free ride in kicks. "Foot muscles can atrophy if you're in shoes all day long," says Stephen Pribut, a podiatrist in Washington, D.C. Strengthening your feet and ankles enables the rest of your running parts—knees, hips, and back—to function their best and reduce injury risk. So after you run, slip off your shoes and socks and do a few simple exercises—calf raises, jumping jacks, balance on one foot—to warm up. Then try this barefoot training routine recommended by Pribut. —*Adam Bean*



WOBBLE BOARD BALANCE

Works feet, shins, calves; prevents shinsplints, Achilles strain

→ Place both feet on the board. Rock forward and back. Work up to 30 seconds of continuous wobbling. Take a break. Then rock side to side (above). Work up to 30 seconds. When this feels easy, combine these exercises to move the board in a circular motion.



TOE CURLS

Strengthens the foot; protects against shinsplints and plantar fasciitis; improves push-off power

→ Either sitting or standing, place a small towel on the floor in front of you. Using the toes of one foot, gather the towel, gradually pulling it toward you. Repeat three times with each foot.



ONE-LEG SQUATS

Strengthens feet, legs, glutes; improves balance; protects against ankle sprains, shinsplints, and Achilles strain

→ Lift one leg and try to keep it straight. Keeping your torso upright, slowly squat down. Rise back up. Start with eight to 12, and work up to 20. Too hard? Start with double-legged squats.



ONE-FOOT HOPS—WITH A TWIST

Strengthens feet and lower legs; improves balance

→ Hop on one foot. With each jump, face forward, and point your grounded foot to the left, forward, to the right, forward, left, forward, right, and so on. Do 15 to 20 hops per foot.



TOE PICKUPS

Strengthens feet; prevents shinsplints, plantar fasciitis

→ Place five to 10 small objects in front of you. Lift each one with the toes of one foot. Take the object and release it, forming another pile. Switch feet and move the pile back. Do three sets with each foot.



Watch a video demonstration of these barefoot strength-training exercises at runnersworld.com/barefeet.



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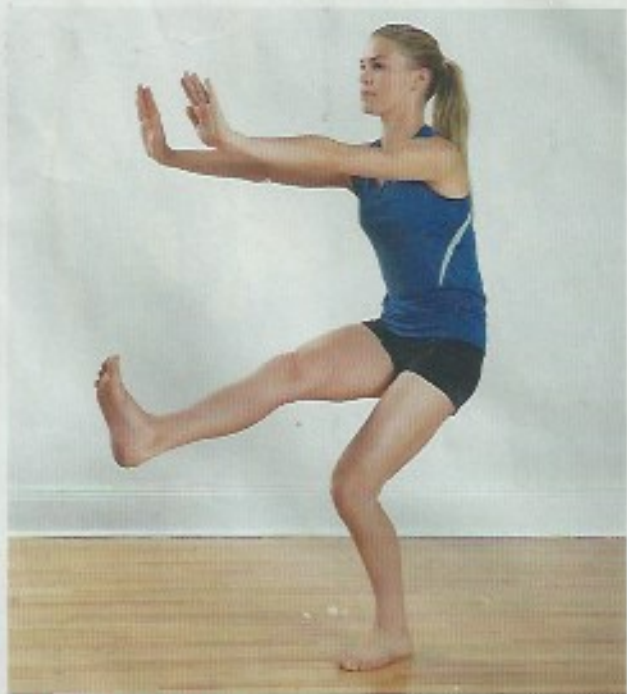
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