

Arch Pain

KEY POINTS

- Foot arches are made up of tough bands of tissue called ligaments that keep the bones of your feet in place. Pain may be caused by injuries, having flat feet, being overweight, or wearing shoes that don't properly support your feet.
 - To treat arch pain, your healthcare provider may recommend stretching and strengthening exercises or shoe inserts called orthotics.
 - Arch pain can be prevented by keeping a healthy weight and wearing shoes that fit properly and have proper arch support. Stretching your feet and arches before your activity will also help prevent this injury.
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What is arch pain?

There are two arches in your foot. One runs the length of your foot, and the other runs across your foot. The arches are made up of tough bands of tissue called ligaments that keep the bones of your feet in place.

You may recover from mild arch pain within a few days to a few weeks. Recovering from severe arch pain may take longer.

What is the cause?

Arch pain may be caused by:

- Overuse or sudden injury to the ligaments from activities such as running, hiking, walking, and jumping
- Having flat feet or feet that flatten and roll inward when you walk
- Shoes that don't properly support the bottom of your feet
- Being overweight

What are the symptoms?

The symptom is pain along the bottom of your foot.

How is it diagnosed?

Your healthcare provider will ask about your symptoms and medical history and examine you.

How is it treated?

To treat this condition:

- Put an ice pack, gel pack, or package of frozen vegetables wrapped in a cloth on the injured area every 3 to 4 hours for up to 20 minutes at a time.
- Take nonprescription pain medicine, such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or naproxen. Read the label and take as directed. Unless recommended by your healthcare provider, you should not take these medicines for more than 10 days.
 - Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medicines (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, naproxen, and aspirin, may cause stomach bleeding and other problems. These risks increase with age.
 - Acetaminophen may cause liver damage or other problems. Unless recommended by your provider, don't take more than 3000 milligrams (mg) in 24 hours. To make sure you don't take too much, check other medicines you take to see if they also contain acetaminophen. Ask your provider if you need to avoid drinking alcohol while taking this medicine.
- Use an arch support or tape your arch as directed by your provider. Your healthcare provider may recommend shoe inserts, called orthotics. You can buy orthotics at a pharmacy or athletic shoe store or they can be custom-made.

Your healthcare provider may recommend stretching and strengthening exercises to help you heal. For example, rolling the arch of your foot on a tennis or golf ball several times a day and stretching the calf muscles can help you heal.

How can I help prevent arch pain?

Arch pain can be prevented by keeping a healthy weight and wearing shoes that fit properly and have proper arch support. Stretching your feet and arches before your activity will also help prevent this injury.

This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. The information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional.

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Transverse arch



Longitudinal arch

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