

# The Heeling Touch

A Publication of Southern California E.S.W.T

## New Innovations in the Treatment of Heel Pain

In a consumer survey conducted by the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons, 66% of those questioned reported that their feet hurt on a regular basis. Many of them feel they must "just live with the pain." But foot pain is not normal!

Heel pain affects 2.5 million people each year in the U.S. Sharp pain, aching or stiffness on the bottom of one or both heels is a very common ailment. The pain is often at its worst upon awakening in the morning (or after sitting down for an extended period and then resuming activity), causing hobbling or limping for a few minutes before a comfortable stride can be resumed. As weight continues to be applied during walking or standing, mild or severe pain may persist. In adults, office workers, laborers and athletes develop the problem most frequently, although children too, can be affected if the growing bone becomes irritated.

Treatments for chronic heel pain caused by an inflamed ligament (plantar fasciitis) consists of conservative measures such as arch inserts, oral anti-inflammatories, injections, physical therapy, and soft cast or splints. The method for treating resistant heel pain caused by plantar fasciitis for the past 4 decades has been the surgical release of the heel ligament either traditionally or through video (endoscope) technology. Although an effective treatment, it was not without adverse effects or complications. Since no other treatment was available these downsides were tolerated and managed.

The year 2001 marked a new beginning in the treatment of heel pain. A new medical device and treatment called Extracorporeal Shock Wave Therapy (E.S.W.T.) achieved F.D.A. approval after 2 years of U.S. clinical studies and 7 years of European studies. This new treatment uses a similar technology to Lithotripsy, a procedure where a very powerful sound/shock wave is aimed at a kidney stone to shatter and eliminate it from the kidney. E.S.W.T. for plantar fasciitis uses a lower level shock wave aimed at the inflamed, painful ligament. This bruises the ligament causing new blood vessels to form in the injured area. Formation of new blood vessels and circulation accelerates the healing of the chronically injured ligament leading to heel pain relief.

Dr. David Lee, a podiatric surgeon, was the first surgeon in Southern California to use Dornier's Ultrasound guided E.S.W.T.. He reports, "Patients undergoing the procedure have reported phenomenal success with 90% improvement in pain in just 3-4 weeks. Since E.S.W.T. is only indicated in those patients who have failed to respond to conservative treatments this success represents a huge medical breakthrough. Patients no longer have to undergo heel spur surgery to get relief. Now they just spend 30 minutes with the E.S.W.T. device and go back to virtually all regular activities."

Even with the recent advent of new medical technology for heel pain treatment, second generation machines already are being produced for the U.S. market with promises of even greater effectiveness. Dornier MedTech, the innovators of shockwave, had their EPOS Ultra F.D.A. approved in September of 2001. The second generation shock wave machine is the only device which incorporates ultrasound video allowing the surgeon to actually see the problematic tissues before applying the shock wave. Dr. Lee adds, "Unlike first generation units (Healthronic's Ossatron) which forced you to aim your shock wave blindly, Dornier's EPOS ultrasound guidance system allows precise placement of the wave. Shock Wave treatment has never been this effective. It's definitely on the leading edge of orthopedic medicine."

The future is here for the treatment of heel pain. For more information on E.S.W.T. you can call Dr. David Lee at (602) 340-8686 or go to the following website resources:

[www.ArizonaPodiatry.com](http://www.ArizonaPodiatry.com)



Dr. David Lee training 22 surgeons on the newest treatment for heel pain- The Dornier EPOS Ultra

