



FOOT SENSE

A monthly newsletter from your podiatrist



*Happy
New Year*

Dr. Rion Berg

January 2025

Heel Pain & Running: Top Tips for a Pain-Free Start to the New Year

In our December newsletter I discussed “How to Stay Active Safely in the Winter”. I’m continuing this trend by focusing on running because so many people put this sport at the top of their New Year’s resolution list.



In this newsletter we’ll look at why heel pain tends to occur in runners, what other factors make this problem more likely, and what you can do to prevent it from happening or recurring.

The top causes of heel pain in runners are plantar fasciitis and Achilles tendonitis. They share a lot of the same reasons for their development, making their treatment, and prevention similar.

Causes of Heel Pain

When too much stress and strain are placed on the plantar fascia it can become inflamed. Because runners place seven extra pounds of pressure on their feet when running, they are more likely to develop plantar fasciitis and Achilles tendonitis than someone who is more sedentary.

But not everyone who runs develops heel pain. Additional risk factors are:

- Tight calf muscles
- Flat feet or high arches
- Extra weight

Inside this Issue:

- Foot and Ankle Center Photos—2
- Chicken Parmesan Soup—2
- Heel Pain & Running: Top Tips for a Pain-Free New Year (cont)—3
- Building Greater Social Connections in 2025—4



Redi-thotics

\$50

Continue on Page 3



Sprucing Up the Office for the New Year



Jovie—our wonderful mail carrier

Chicken Parmesan Soup

- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 (8-ounce) boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning, divided
- ½ teaspoon ground pepper, divided
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped (about 2 cups)
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped garlic
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 6 cups unsalted chicken broth
- 1 (28-ounce) can no-salt-added crushed tomatoes
- 8 ounces whole-wheat penne (about 2 cups)
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 1 (5-ounce) package baby spinach (about 5 packed cups)
- ⅓ cup packed chopped fresh basil, plus more for garnish
- 2 tablespoons red-wine vinegar
- ¾ cup Parmesan crisps, lightly crushed (about 1¼ ounces)



Source: [Eating Well](#)

1. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Season 2 chicken breasts with 1½ teaspoons Italian seasoning and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Cook, turning once, until browned, about 6 minutes. Transfer to a plate, reserving the oil in the pot.
2. Saute onion over medium-high heat, until beginning to soften.. Add 2 tablespoons garlic, ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper, and the remaining ½ teaspoon Italian seasoning; cook, stirring often, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add 6 cups broth, 1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes and the browned chicken; bring to a boil. Stir in 8 ounces penne, ¾ teaspoon salt and the remaining ¼ teaspoon pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the pasta is al dente and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest portion of chicken registers 165°F, about 10 minutes.
3. Turn off heat; use tongs to transfer the chicken to a cutting board. Using 2 forks, shred the chicken; return it to the pot. Stir in 1 (5-ounce) package baby spinach and ⅓ cup basil; stir until the spinach is wilted, about 1 minute. Stir in 2 tablespoons vinegar. Ladle into 8 bowls; divide ¾ cup Parmesan crisps among the bowls. Garnish with additional basil, if desired.

- Worn-out or unsupportive shoes
- Inadequate training
- Too much training with no rest
- Hill running or stair climbing—these activities tend to cause Achilles tendonitis.

8 Tips to Prevent A Heel Pain Flare-Up When Running

While you can't change your foot type or your body structure, you can do specific things to reduce the effect they have on your arch and plantar fascia.

1. Stretching Before and After You Run

Use [dynamic warm-ups before](#) and [static stretches after running](#). While wall stretches are the most common and easiest to do, it's important to do them long enough to have an effect—30 secs to 1 minute.



If your calf is particularly tight and has been a major cause of your heel pain in the past, you'll need to do more than a wall stretch. I recommend using an [Achilles splint at home](#) to all of my patients with tight calf muscles.

2. Inserts or Custom Orthotics—some people just need an insert to prevent a flare-up. However, most people need to get cast for [custom orthotics](#) and wear them consistently when they run to prevent future flare-ups.

3. Purchase the Right Running Shoes

- Go to a reputable running store
- Bring your custom orthotics to the store to ensure proper fit.

- Go shopping at the end of the day when your feet are most swollen to get the best fit.
- Get your feet measured
- Replace worn-out shoes every 6 months or every 500 miles.
- Purchase shoes to match your foot type
- Purchase shoes to match the surface you're running on—e.g. tracks vs. trails.

[Click here for more information on buying running shoes](#)

4. Build Up Your Training Slowly

Make sure you're increasing your running time and distance by only 10% per week to allow your body to heal.

5. Build in Time for Cross Training

It's important to build in time for [cross training](#) to increase your flexibility, strength, and your core stability.



6. Avoid Running on Hills

Hill running can put you at risk for Achilles tendonitis. If you've had this condition in the past, avoid them and keep treadmill incline at a minimum.

7. Consider Weight Loss

Additional pounds will add stress to your feet when you run. Weight loss can make a big difference in reducing your heel pain risk.

Building Greater Social Connections in 2025

We all thrive on connection. It is a fundamental need as vital to our well-being as proper nutrition and regular exercise. Strong social connections and a sense of community have been shown to improve mental health, enhance physical well-being, and even extend lifespan.

Belonging to a supportive community can act as a buffer against stress. When life becomes challenging, being able to share experiences with others helps reduce feelings of loneliness and promotes resilience. Social ties have been linked to lower rates of anxiety, depression, and chronic illnesses like heart disease. They can even boost immune function and speed up recovery from illness or surgery.



So how can you increase your social connections in 2025?

- Choose something you've always wanted to learn about and take a class (North Seattle College or Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. You're bound to meet new people who have the same interests as you!
- Volunteer – volunteering for a local organization will help you feel more connected to your community. Eg. North Helpline in Lake City is always looking for volunteers
- Join a club – eg. Toastmasters is a world-wide public speaking organization. There are many clubs in the Seattle metro area. Here's one in North Seattle.

While finding new friends may be just what you need, it's also important to nurture existing relationships by spending quality time with loved ones. Reach out to folks you haven't talked to in awhile and for those who live close suggest you meet for lunch or a walk.

Investing in social relationships is an investment in health. By building and nurturing a community, we not only enrich our lives but also pave the way for better physical and emotional well-being.

Get This Newsletter Delivered to Your Inbox

Thanks so much for taking the time to read our newsletter. I hope you've found the information helpful. If you've received this newsletter online, please feel free to forward it to family or friends.

If you picked up this newsletter and would like to subscribe, you can do so by scanning the QR code on the right.

—Dr. Rion Berg

To make an appointment, call us at 206-368-7000.

