



# Next Step Newsletter

Next Step  
Physical Therapy  
(516) 681- 8070

April 2011

*Giving you information and answers to any physical therapy, health or fitness related questions*

## New approach to keeping patients informed!

Here at Next Step Physical Therapy we are going the extra distance to deliver you information that is more than just my opinion ( I'm tired of listening to myself anyway) with regards to important health and wellness information. What we are going to do starting this issue is provide for you some of the most recent research that comes out pertaining to musculoskeletal injuries.

Each month we hope to give you a link to information we think our readers—people who have had musculo-skeletal injuries—would find interesting. Just follow the link to the first article which is about Heel Pain. We invite you to call or email us with any questions you might have about the article as well as pass on the information to friends and family. The Journal of Orthopedic and Sports Physical Therapy was nice enough to allow us to share their articles with everyone so let's take advantage.

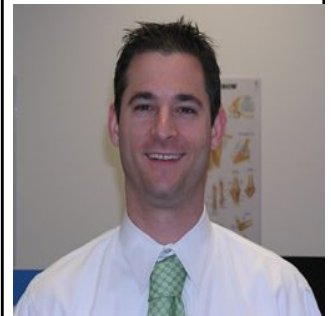
**We would like to thank the following people for referring us patients: Donna Cole, Mary Garone, The Platania Family, Andrew Rubin, and The Bauer Family.**

## What's going on this Month?

We are proud to say that on 4/15/11 something great happened....No, not tax day (although this year it was the 18th). On April 15th, Next Step Physical Therapy turned 9 years old. It's hard to believe that we've been here for nine whole years. But for certain, we wouldn't have had the amount of success we've enjoyed without a lot of help from you guys. When you spread the word to others about our services, it's clear that they have listened. Our patient referrals continue to climb higher and higher. Please allow all of us at Next Step to sincerely thank you for allowing us to help so many people by letting others know about our services. Keep it up!

## Updates

### Welcome to the Next Step Newsletter!



- If you have a friend or family member that you think could use our help please let us know or have them call us.
- If you would like more information on any of the topics discussed here please give us a call.
- If you have a question that you would like to have answered (maybe in the next newsletter) please don't hesitate to call.
- What topics are you interested in and would like to see in the newsletter? Let us know.

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# Heel Pain

## *Hands-on Physical Therapy and Stretching Prove Effective for Treating Heel Pain*

*J Orthop Sports Phys Ther* 2011;41(2):51. doi:10.2519/jospt.2011.0501

**D**O YOU EVER WAKE UP WITH PAIN IN THE HEEL OF YOUR foot first thing in the morning? If so, you may have plantar fasciitis, the most common type of heel pain. People with heel pain typically report a sharp pain under their heel that may spread into the arch of the foot. The pain is often worse when the person stands after lying down or following a period of sitting—for example, taking the first couple of steps in the morning or standing up after watching TV. Although the pain may actually

decrease with activity, such as walking, it tends to return at the end of the day. Plantar fasciitis is not typically the result of an injury. Instead, this condition usually develops gradually and, if untreated, may get worse over time. By current estimates, 2 million Americans develop heel pain each year, and about 10% of all people will have heel pain at some point in their lives. The February 2011 issue of *JOSPT* published a research study that provides new evidence that can help people who suffer from heel pain.



**CALF STRETCHES.** While standing with your foot straight ahead, lean forward and keep your heel on the floor until you feel a stretch sensation in your calf. Perform this stretch first with the back leg straight and then repeat it with the back knee bent.



**FOOT STRETCH.** While seated, grab the base of your toes and pull them toward your shin.



**HANDS-ON THERAPY.** An example of a trigger point pressure release technique that can be performed on your calf muscles by your physical therapist.

### NEW INSIGHTS

In this study, 60 patients with heel pain were randomly placed into 1 of 2 treatment groups. One group of patients performed calf and foot stretches and had hands-on therapy provided by a physical therapist (see drawings at left), while the other group only performed the stretches. The treatment performed by the physical therapist focused on treating sore points, sometimes called “trigger points.” Trigger points are small sections of muscles that feel “knotty” and, when pressed, become more painful. The researchers found greater improvements in patients who both performed the stretches and received hands-on therapy. This finding is important because it suggests that people who are not getting better on their own may benefit from hands-on treatment.

### PRACTICAL ADVICE

Although stretching the calf and foot can reduce heel pain, the addition of hands-on physical therapy resulted in better pain relief and greater improvements in function during the first month of treatment. The 3 stretches in this study were performed using a 20-second hold, 20-second recovery time and were repeated 3 times, twice a day. If you have heel pain, you may wish to seek the help of a physical therapist who can instruct you on the proper stretching techniques to perform. The physical therapist can also determine if you are a candidate for trigger point soft tissue techniques applied to your calf muscles, as were used in this study. For more information on the management of heel pain, contact your physical therapist specializing in musculoskeletal disorders.

For this and more topics, visit *JOSPT Perspectives for Patients* online at [www.jospt.org](http://www.jospt.org).

This *JOSPT Perspectives for Patients* is based on an article by Renan-Ordine R, et al, titled “Effectiveness of Myofascial Trigger Point Manual Therapy Combined With a Self-Stretching Protocol for the Management of Plantar Heel Pain: A Randomized Controlled Trial.” (*J Orthop Sports Phys Ther* 2011;41(2):43-50. doi:10.2519/jospt.2011.3504)

This Perspectives was written by a team of *JOSPT's* Editorial board and staff, with **Deydre S. Teyhen**, PT, PhD, Editor, and **Jeanne Robertson**, Illustrator.



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