



PROfiles: Heel Spur Pain & Plantar Fasciitis GONE!

I have had terrible heel pain for six years. I couldn't find comfortable shoes, not even sneakers and I just about gave up wearing dressy two-inch heels. I have a box full of heel pads, rubber, gel, foam and leather, arch supports, lifts and many inner soles of various thicknesses and materials. I have two sets of custom orthotics for my shoes. I spent a lot of money on these items trying to find a solution to my pain. Using these various aids I was forced to buy many pairs of shoes in larger sizes to accommodate the items I put in my shoes trying to make my foot comfortable. I found no relief and the pain just kept getting worse. The pain ruled my life by limiting the things I could do.

So, I went to a podiatrist, assuming that the problem was in my foot. He x-rayed my foot and told me I had a *heel spur* and told me a shot of cortisone would bring me relief so I agreed to it. The shot was very painful and brought some relief for about six weeks but then the pain returned. I went back to the doctor and was given another cortisone shot. The relief was short lived. I thought it was just one more unsuccessful attempt to stop the pain. Since I didn't get much relief, I waited until the pain was almost unbearable to go back again. At this point I had a third shot and he suggested that I have surgery.

I decided to get a second opinion, so I went to an orthopedic surgeon. This doctor took and x-ray and said that I had *Plantar Fasciitis* and he felt I should have another cortisone shot. Reluctantly, I consented because I was in so much pain and didn't know what else to do (neither did the doctors). I didn't get much relief and a month or so later I returned to the surgeon. He told me there wasn't much that could be done. He said he could *try* an operation, but admitted the success rate was poor. I asked if there were any other options. He recommended a *fifth shot* and putting my foot in a cast to rest it. Desperate for a solution I agreed. I went home with a fiberglass cast on my foot. The cast was very tight and uncomfortable, so much so that I could not sleep. Two days later I returned to the doctor and had it cut off. He cut the cast in such a way that I could use it at night to keep my foot supported by the cast and an ace bandage. This too failed because to hold my foot firmly in place, the bandage had to be pulled so tight that it caused circulation problems.

I had become depressed and desperate for a solution. For over five years I have not been able to walk without pain. I felt like a prisoner in my home. I just turned 60 and with the exception of my foot I felt 35. I have no other illnesses and wanted to do so many things, but I just couldn't stand or walk for any length of time. There's a saying, "when your feet hurt, you hurt all over." It was true in my case. Things I used to love to do such things as golfing, shopping and household chores. I now dreaded them because of the pain. I got so I debated if it was really necessary to walk from one end of my home to the other to get something. Getting meals while standing on tile floors was especially painful. The start of everyday was depressing because the first few steps when I got out of bed were so painful I would have to hang onto the bed to keep from falling.

The final straw came when my husband and I went on a trip to Las Vegas that we had planned for three years. I never realized the amount of walking that would be required. We went with another couple and I had to cancel out on trips to other casinos because I was in so much pain and just couldn't do the required walking. Heel pain ruined my vacation.



I was desperate for a solution so *I went to the Internet in search of an answer*. I found on the web many of the things I had already tried, but one in particular got my attention.

It was called *Active Release Technique*. The person who developed ART was based in Colorado Springs, Colorado. I called the office for information and was told there were only ten doctors certified in this technique in Florida. To my relief and good fortune one of them was in Sarasota, Florida---just a few miles away.

I called and spoke to the doctor to ask if he could help me. To my surprise he said he could probably correct the problem in a few visits. I reminded the doctor that I had had this problem for over five years and tried many things and to date and nothing worked. He assured me that ART worked very quickly *to correct the cause of the problem* and once the cause was fixed the pain would go away. I had doubts that this would correct the problem, but I wanted the pain to stop so I made an appointment.

During my first visit, Dr. Prokopiak explained to me the reason for and cause of my pain. For the first time I understood why this problem never got better. To my surprise, he said that much of the problem was in the muscles of my lower leg. During his examination he gently touched a spot above my ankle that was so painful that I yelled out in pain when he touched it. He showed me the place where his thumb had been and there was an indentation in the skin. He said this was evidence of fluid that had built up in the tissues of my leg. Next he told me that he would need to restore the function of the muscles in my leg. He explained that the muscles of the leg control the toes and arch of the foot. It was then that I remembered that for many years my toes curled under tightly. I just thought that was normal, but he advised me that it showed the dysfunction of the muscles. I couldn't help wonder why the podiatrist and the orthopedic surgeon had never explained this to me. Dr. Prokopiak's explanation made so much sense it gave me confidence that he could help me.

When I asked if the treatments would be painful he said that any discomfort would be temporary. He explained the process of breaking up scar tissue and adhesions in and between the muscles could be painful. I didn't like the idea of it being painful, but because the pain would be temporary, I decided to proceed with the treatments. Since I bruise very easily, I asked if this treatment would give me bruises.

The doctor stated that the area that gets worked on might be tender for up to 36 hours afterward. It might 'feel' bruised but it shouldn't be black and blue.

For my first treatment he deeply massaged my leg, but then he did something different. He had me move my foot up and down while he held onto my leg. This is what ART is about, moving muscles against resistance. Though the treatment was, uncomfortable, it sort of 'hurt good'—it just felt like it was helping. After the ART treatment the doctor manipulated my toes, ankle and hip joints. He explained to me that what he does takes care of most repetitive motion problems in 6 to 10 visits. However because my problem was so severe it would probably take close to twenty visits. He said that I would know within 6 visits whether the treatments were helping.



After my first few treatments I was committed to giving this a chance to work, but it wasn't easy. There were days when I didn't think it was getting better. There were times when I left his office and my foot hurt worse than when I went in. For two months I did stretching exercises and used an incline board. Soon my foot started to feel better. I could go grocery shopping without pain. If the pain started up I could do exercised and rest it for a while and the pain would go away. I got up in the morning and my foot didn't hurt!

At this time Dr. Prokopiak prescribed a special boot that I was to wear to bed at night. Since the muscle function had been restored, the boot would help maintain the corrective gains we had made. At this point, I would do things like grocery shopping and come home and realize that *my foot did not hurt*. Sometimes I couldn't believe it. I started doing more and more things and I was pain free. It had been a long process but Dr. Prokopiak's treatments worked.

I have been pain free ever since and I want to tell the world. I had just about given up when I met Dr. Prokopiak. Everything turned out as he said it would and I can't say enough good things about Dr. Prokopiak and ART treatments. I'm going to start to play golf again and I feel twenty years younger because I'm out of pain.

It has now been six months since my last treatment. I actually have bought new shoes for the first time in six years! I have been to Disney and walked all day pain free! All I can say is that ART is worth the effort and I wish more people would try this and get the results I have gotten.

Sincerely,

Pat Dingman
Bradenton, Florida