



ADVICE

EDITED BY ADAM BEAN AND BETH MOXEY

FOOT PAIN
ARCH RIVAL



Band aid: Working the foot inward against a tension band strengthens the tendon/muscle complex that supports your arch.

Q: At night the arches of my feet ache tremendously. I often get out of bed two to four times to stand on a foot roller, which relieves the ache somewhat. What's causing this?

G.P., Tallahassee, Florida

A: It appears that your arches ache due to spasms. This requires pressure-point massage to stop the spasm and thus the pain cycle.

The posterior tibial muscle/tendon complex attaches to the arch and supports it while you are standing, walking and running. When active, the area is kept warm and loose. While you're sleeping, however, the muscle tightens up in response to the stress placed on it during the day. Other muscles surrounding the arch also tighten up and spasm, causing pain. Here are several things that might help you:

1. Ice the arches for 15 minutes before bedtime, and heat them for 15 minutes when you get up.

2. Once or twice during the day, massage the arch area to increase flexibility and to break the spasm. Applying heat prior to massage helps loosen the area. In the evening, try rolling your foot from heel to toe over a soda bottle filled with ice. This will reduce swelling and stretch out the area.

3. Buy arch supports to reduce the stress placed on the muscles and tendons.

4. Finally, strengthen your posterior tibial tendons by performing resistance exercises with a towel or tension band. (See photo to above.) To do this, move the forefoot

inward against resistance. Three sets of 10 to 15 repetitions for each foot should do it, once or twice a day.

If pain persists, take ibuprofen in the dosage recommended on the bottle. There is also an over-the-counter medication called Leg-O-Trim for spasms.

In addition, you should make an appointment to see a sports podiatrist. An X-ray of the foot may be necessary to see if you have an extra or enlarged bone that is irritating the posterior tibial tendon.

—Richard T. Braver, M.D., a sports podiatrist practicing in Englewood, New Jersey, and a former 3:51 1500-meter runner

TRAINING WITH MUSIC
FINE TUNED

Q: I often train with my Walkman and have found that my times tend to be faster when I do so. Is the music giving me more energy? Should I use the Walkman in races, too?

G.W., Rydal, Pennsylvania

A: Legions of other runners have become aware of the "magic" of music. It's a powerful tool capable of creating physiological and psychological changes that enhance performance. Just how this happens is still a mystery. One theory claims that music causes the body to produce endorphins, the same chemicals produced by extended physical exertion. These endorphins may contribute to bursts of energy and better performance.

However, using headphones makes you less aware of cars, dogs and other running hazards. So, for safety reasons, it isn't a good idea to train or race with a Walkman. I suggest you listen to music before you run.

For race motivation, try this regimen: Thirty minutes before the start, listen to your favorite classical or mellow jazz music as you stretch your body and visualize your upcoming effort. Follow this with 15 minutes of "dance music," preferably to the beat of your race-pace stride. These tunes will raise your excitement level just before the start, and you'll go to the starting line feeling "pumped." You'll also find yourself playing the sounds in your mind throughout the race; this will keep you in synch.

Hundreds of my clients have followed this routine, with good results. One of them, Regina Jacobs, the women's 1500-meter

140 Grand Avenue
Englewood, NJ 07631
Fax (201) 569-3536
(201) 569-7672

4-14 Saddle River Road
Suite 103
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410
(201) 791-1881
(973) 831-1774

Reconstructive Foot & Ankle Surgery
Podiatrist/Orthotic Specialist

Dr. Richard T. Braver

Active
FOOT & ANKLE
CARE CENTER
World-class foot, ankle & lower leg care

JOHN HAMEL