PHOENIX MAGAZINE SPECIAL ISSUE

PHOENIX
MAGAZINE

2007

MEDICAL DIRECTORY

YOUR GUIDE TO MORE THAN **7,000** VALLEY PHYSICIANS

Plus:

FIND A HOSPITAL IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSESSING ARIZONA'S NURSING CRISIS
THE NEW DOWNTOWN MEDICAL SCHOOL
DOs vs. MDs: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

MEDICAL DIRECTORY $4.50

ADVERTISEMENT

AZ Institute of Footcare

An Exciting Treatment for Heel Pain

More and more people are now walking for fitness. This could explain why heel pain is one of the fastest growing foot problems in America. If you are suffering from heel pain, here a few questions to ask yourself. Is the pain worse when first putting weight on the area in the morning, then, eases after being up for awhile? Does the pain return as the day continues? Do you have any pain after resting or relaxing for a short period? Does your heel pain interfere with normal everyday activities?

Several million Americans suffer from plantar fasciitis, the most common type of heel pain. Inflammation, overuse and injury can cause this painful condition. Symptoms include sharp pain and stiffness on the bottom of the heel. "The pain is often worse with the first steps in the morning, or after periods of rest," explains Dr. Kerry Zang, Podiatric Medical Director of the Arizona Institute of Footcare Physicians, "after standing for a while the pain becomes more like a dull ache." Fortunately, heel pain is a problem with many treatment options. "Conservative care relieves the pain for most people," says Dr. Zang, "and is always the first step in treating heel pain." These treatments involve anti-inflammatory medication, injections, physical therapy or stretching exercises, night splints and custom orthotics to put in your shoes. Patients usually respond to this course of treatment within three to six months, and it can be very successful.

In cases where these measures do not resolve the pain, surgery was the next option, until recently. "Heel pain surgery has come a long way in the past 10 years, and my patients have been responding well to minimally invasive surgery for plantar fasciitis," says Dr. Zang. However, he is very excited about the results from a relatively new high-energy shockwave treatment for heel pain. "It is not very often that a new, non-invasive treatment becomes available with the potential to resolve a painful, debilitating and very common foot problem," says Dr. Zang, "Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy, ESWT, is an exciting treatment option to utilize before surgery, with a success rate of 80 to 85%." A special device generates shockwaves that are focused onto the problem area. He says, "The treatment triggers the patient's body to repair itself." The concept behind this therapy is for the shockwaves to stimulate the development of new blood vessels so that the healing process can be initiated. Dr. Zang explains, "it actually causes a controlled trauma to the heel, and blood goes to the area to help it get better."

In addition to stimulating the body's own healing mechanism, there are many other benefits of ESWT. "A big advantage is the procedure can now be accomplished in the office," says Dr. Zang, with the new equipment available it is not necessary to go to a surgery center or hospital. The recovery period is shorter, there are fewer side effects and the risk is minimal because it is non-invasive. The risks associated with surgery and general anesthesia are also eliminated. The treatment takes about twenty minutes and patients go home in regular shoes. He says patients occasionally report some minor pain or discomfort after the treatment. There might be some bruising or swelling in the area, but if it does occur, it usually resolves in a few days. Most people show significant improvement in six to twelve weeks, with many reporting pain relief right after the treatment. When healing is complete patients can usually return to all activities without restriction.

"ESWT is wonderful addition to heel pain treatment, as it preserves the integrity of the plantar fascia," says Dr. Zang, "This modality provides one more effective level of treatment, hopefully avoiding the need for invasive surgery in the future."

Kerry Zang, DPM • Robert Zobel, DPM • Todd Galle, DPM • Kimberly Leach, DPM • Donald Siegel, DPM • Bruce Werber, DPM

Arizona Institute of Footcare Physicians • 1620 S. Stapley Dr. Suite 132 Mesa • 480.834.8804