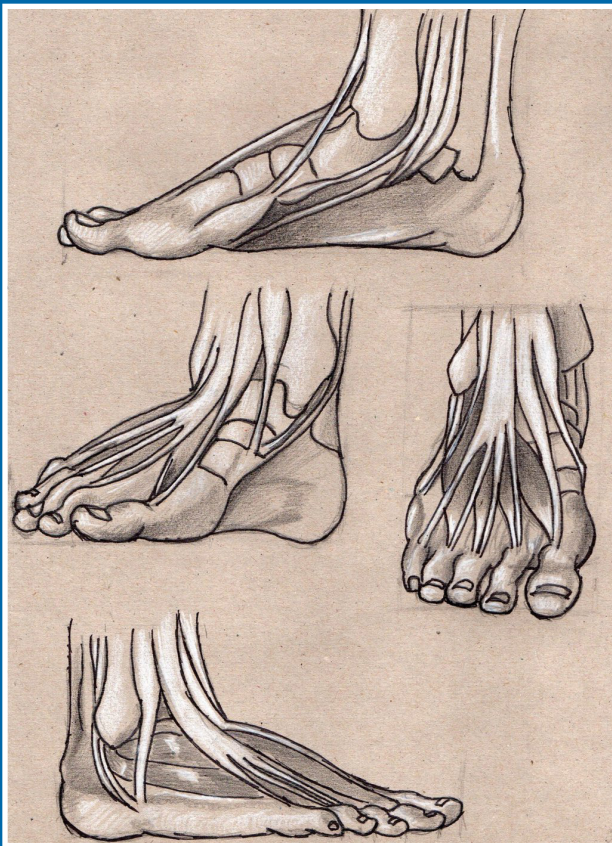


Know Your Feet

The foot contains three main segments: the rear-foot, mid-foot, and forefoot. These three segments work together to allow the foot to be flexible enough to handle lots of surfaces yet strong enough to support the body in walking, running, and play.



**University of Delaware
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Foot Center



Foot Pain

Plantar fasciitis is an irritation of the plantar fascia—the tough tissue on the bottom of the foot that begins at the heel and is attached to the toes. It can result in pain and lead to a **heel spur**, a bony growth on the underside, front part of the heel bone. Plantar fasciitis pain is typically worse in the morning, especially the first few steps. This pain generally diminishes over the course of the day.



Metatarsalgia is pain in the forefoot, usually caused by the over-prominence of one of the metatarsal heads, i.e., the heads of the bones in the ball of the foot.

Nerve Conditions

Tarsal Tunnel—Often caused by ill-fitting shoes with insufficient arch support and/or heel stability. This can lead to excessive foot collapse, causing stretching and inflammation to soft tissues along the inside of the ankle to the foot. In turn, this can irritate a major nerve that runs just behind the ligaments. Much like its “cousin” Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, it can result in numbness, tingling, or even pain in the front part of the ankle or into the foot.

Diabetic Neuropathy—Diabetes can harm the health of the nerves in our bodies, leading to numbness and/or tingling. Numbness is a concern as it can lead to injuries and ulcers on the foot. While PT can’t reverse neuropathy, it can reduce its impact and improve function. PTs can also assess your protective sensation, and teach you strategies to protect your feet.

In addition to the nerve disorders highlighted, inflamed nerve bundles can cause **Foot neuromas**, or be trapped in the lower leg, leading to **compartment syndrome**. Physical Therapy is an effective means to reduce the impact of several foot injuries and disorders.

How Can Physical Therapy Help?

- Stretching & Strengthening - increase strength and flexibility of the muscles/soft tissue important to healing.
- Manual treatments for loosening of muscle and tight structures or to improve motion of the joints in the elbow, wrist, and/or shoulder.
- Complete workstation evaluations to modify aggravating work set ups.
- Teach you exercises and self treatments to return to your sport, work, or your daily activities pain free.



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