

Doc can ease heel pain

Hands down, they are the ugliest part of the human body – the feet.

While they are responsible for lugging us around all day, they still manage to get overlooked, even when they're in pain. But neglecting the feet can lead to a lifetime of problems, according to podiatrist Hartley Miltchin of Accent On Feet in Toronto.

A common cause of foot trouble is known as Plantar Fasciitis, or heel spur syndrome, which affects about 2 per cent of Canadians.

This occurs when the thick band of fibrous tissue, which stretches from the toes and anchors in the heel, gets torn. Tears can be brought on by everyday activities such as walking, but inherently it is caused by an imbalance in the feet, forcing them to roll towards the arch and big toe. And the pain can be excruciating, Miltchin says.

While it's predominantly diagnosed in middle age and older, Miltchin insists early foot care can prevent problems later on.

"Just like the eyes or ears, the feet need to be checked," Miltchin says.

While runners are particularly prone to Plantar Fasciitis, it can affect anyone.

"The range is widespread. I see men and women equally, and it is not a factor of weight or ac-

tivity level," he says.

As far as treatment of Plantar Fasciitis goes, Miltchin says stretching is not beneficial. Because it is not a muscle, tendon or ligament, "the band can't stretch, so when you're stretching it, you're just pulling it," he says.

The clinic is the first in North America to offer a non-invasive treatment using radial soundwave technology. While it's costly

at \$600 for three sessions lasting three to five minutes each, it involves no anesthesia or surgical procedure.

The Swiss DolorClast system uses air pressure to create acoustic sound waves

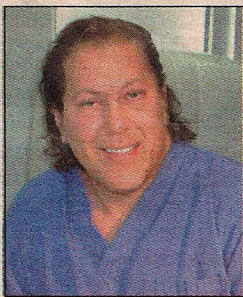
that are directed to the painful foot areas. It is believed to increase metabolism rates in the targeted area, creating new blood vessels and stimulate the release of as endorphins.

Leaving Plantar Fasciitis untreated is like "playing baseball with a broken arm," Miltchin says.

"Most people think that because they walk or work on their feet, that heel pain is normal. It's not uncommon for me to see someone who has suffered for a year and hasn't sought help. But if my vision becomes blurred, I would see an eye doctor."

For more information, call (416) 635-8637.

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Dr. Hartley Miltchin