

# Researchers testing two physical therapy treatments for plantar fasciitis

April 1 2015, by Jim Ritter

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Loyola University Medical Center is conducting a clinical trial on two physical therapy regimens to treat plantar fasciitis, which causes stabbing heel pain.

Plantar fasciitis is the most common cause of [heel pain](#). It involves a band of tissue, called the [plantar fascia](#), that connects the heel bone to the toes. The tissue becomes irritated and inflamed from repeated stress and strain. The pain typically is most severe when taking the first steps in the morning.

In the Loyola study, participants will be randomly assigned to one of two treatment groups. One group will receive therapy treatments that focus on soft tissue mobilization, with massage and techniques that release muscle tightness. This is performed with hand manipulation by a physical therapist. The other group will receive an instrument-assisted therapy called the Graston Technique. The therapist uses stainless steel instruments to comb over and identify [scar tissue](#). The instruments then are used to break up the scar tissue so it can be absorbed by the body. Therapists have taken a continuing education class that has certified them to perform the technique in a safe and effective way.

Participants will undergo two [physical therapy](#) treatments per week for four weeks. Treatments will take 30 to 60 minutes. Both groups will perform stretches and strengthening exercises.

The study is titled "A Randomized Trial Comparing Traditional Soft

## Tissue Mobilization and the Instrument Assisted Soft Tissue Mobilization for the Treatment of Patients with Plantar Fasciitis."

Provided by Loyola University Health System

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