

Heel Bone Bruising

A heel bruise is often caused from an excessive amount of force being applied directly to the bottom of the heel. There is a fat pad at the bottom of the heel that works like a cushion to protect the heel as it strikes the ground and prevents the heel bone from being injured directly.

Common ways people end up bruising their heel are:

- Landing and jumping from high places
- Stepping down on a small stone
- Repeatedly running with your heel striking down on the ground instead of landing on your forefoot, especially in hard shoes

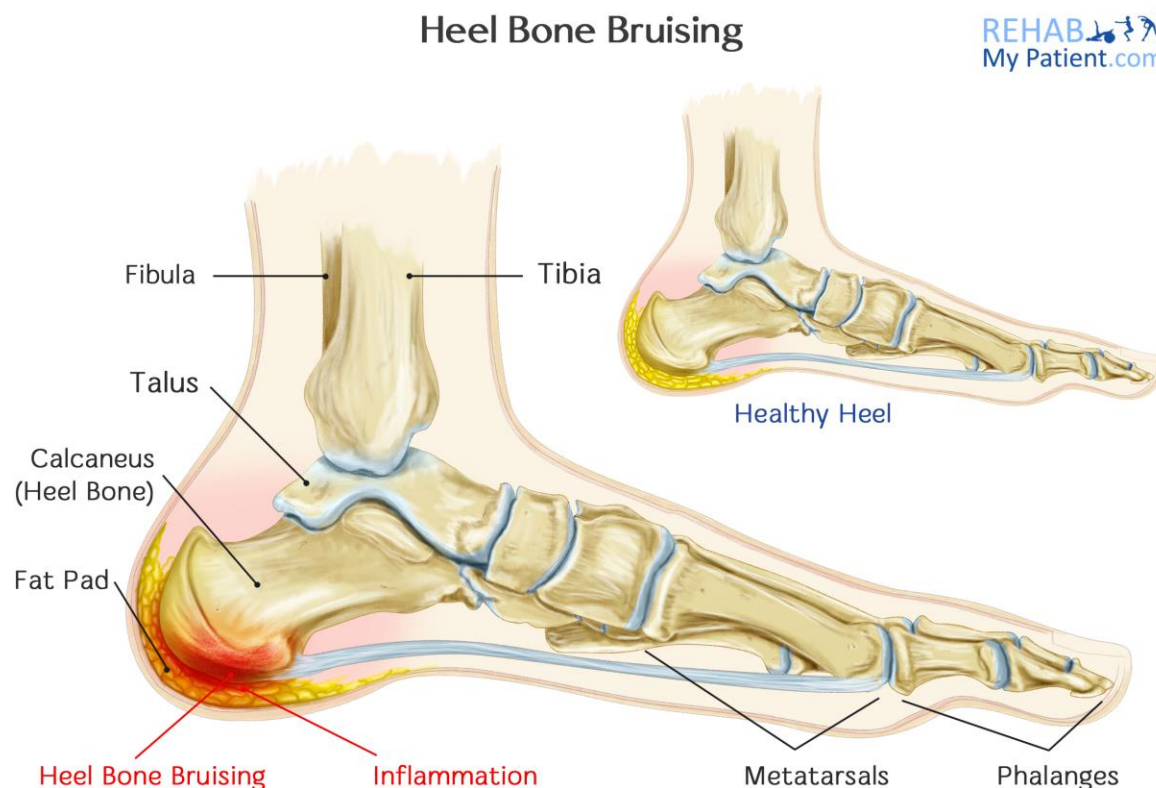
Depending upon the force associated with the injury, fat pads can be contused, completely disrupted or partially disrupted.

Bone bruising can take several weeks to fully heal, and typically up to 3 months.

In severe cases, the heel can end up being fractured. This can be difficult to diagnose compared to heel bone bruising and sometimes they can look very similar. If your therapist is unsure, you may need to have an X-ray to check.

Heel Bone Bruising Anatomy

The feet are full of flexible structures consisting of bones, muscles, joints and soft tissues that allow you to stand upright and perform activities such as running, walking and jumping.



Three sections make up the feet:

- The forefoot contains five longer bones and five toes.
- The midfoot is a collection of bones forming arches in the feet. These include three cuneiform bones, the navicular bone and the cuboid bone.
- The hind foot is composed of the ankle and the heel. The talus bone supporting the leg bones form the ankle. The heel bone is the largest out of all the bones in the foot.

The heel bone is known as the calcaneus. It's a large dense bone that connects to a few other bones in the foot. If you put your hand on your heel, it is the calcaneus you will be feeling. The Achilles tendon attaches into the back of the calcaneus.

How to Treat Heel Bone Bruising:

1. Reduce Activity

Rest is probably the most important, as well as the hardest, for many individuals to do. Foot problems tend to be quite prevalent in today's society because people don't take the time to allow their feet to rest. Professional athletes tend to be the worst at trying to get back into the swing of things too quickly. Reduce the impact you are placing through your legs by reducing the frequency of exercise, the duration, or the intensity.

2. Ice or Heat

Apply ice or heat to the affected area for 5 to 10 minutes at a time three to five times per day. Ice will help to reduce inflammation and pain associated with the condition. Some people find ice more beneficial, and some prefer heat. Your Rehab My Patient therapist will be able to guide you on which they think would be most useful, or perhaps a combination of both.



3. Proper Footwear

Wearing appropriate and suitable footwear is important. Speak to your coach or therapist about what is appropriate for you and for your sport/activities.

Tips:

- If you return to an activity too quickly, the heel won't be able to heal completely, which results in a new bruise forming and restarting the healing process.
- Avoid jumping from high places. Be careful when jumping into swimming pools – make sure they are deep enough.
- Make sure to practice proper running techniques to prevent any unnecessary injuries to the heel. Talk to a coach for more advice. Be mindful of the running surface as concrete is a lot harder than park ground.