

Pain in the heel? Could be a thing called Sever's Disease!

What is it?

Although it sounds pretty bad due to its name, Sever's disease is a relatively short term condition that can usually be handled fairly easily with good advice. Sever's disease occurs in children when the growing part of the heel is injured. This growing part is called the growth plate. The foot is one of the first body parts to grow to full size. This usually occurs in early puberty. During this time, bones often grow faster than muscles and tendons. As a result, muscles and tendons become tight. The heel area is less flexible. During weight-bearing activity (activity performed while standing), the tight heel tendons may put too much pressure at the back of the heel (where the Achilles tendon attaches) and this may injure the heel.

Sever's disease is most common in physically active girls 8 to 10 years old and in physically active boys 10 to 12 years old. Soccer players and gymnasts often get Sever's disease, but children who do any running or jumping activity may be affected. Sever's disease rarely occurs in older teenagers, because the back of the heel has finished growing by the age of 15.

How do you know if you have this Sever's Disease?

You may have Sever's Disease if you have any of these signs:

- Heel pain.
- Heel pain during physical exercise, especially activities that require running or jumping.
- The pain is often at its worst after exercise.
- A tender swelling or bulge on the heel that is sore to touch.
- Limping.
- A tendency to tiptoe.
- Calf muscle stiffness first thing in the morning.

How is it treated?

First, you should cut down or stop any activity that causes heel pain. Treatment will depend on how bad your heel pain is, but may include:

- Rest
- Cold packs
- Flexibility exercises
- Shoe inserts
- Non-weight bearing exercise
- Medication
- Time

If you have heel pain, speak to your parents and come visit one of the physiotherapists in this practice. We can help you – we'll give you the right kind of exercises and advice to make this pain go away quicker!

Here are some exercises that might help you:

1. Calf stretch.
2. Heel cord (Achilles tendon) stretch.
3. Hamstring stretch.
4. Strengthening exercise using a bungee cord or rubber tubing.

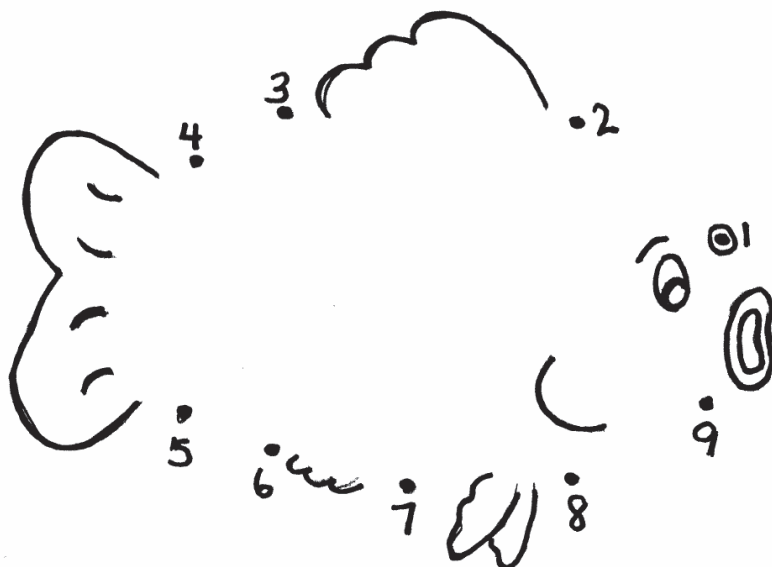
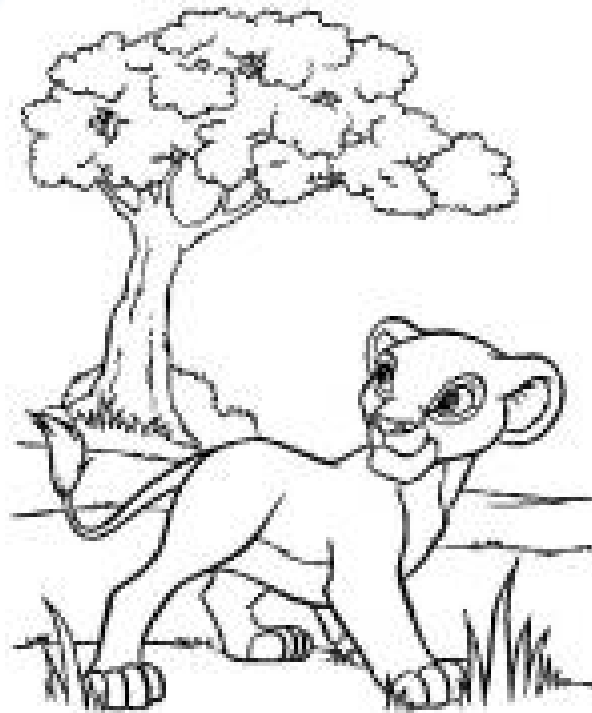
It is important that you do these exercises to stretch the hamstring and calf muscles. Try to do these stretches 5 times each, 2 or 3 times a day. Each stretch should be held for 20 seconds.



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