

Neal's signs and symptoms indicate he has plantar fasciitis, an inflammation of the thick band of tissue that runs across the bottom of his foot and connects his heel to his toes. It's a fairly common repetitive stress injury for older hikers and runners.

Applying the generic treatment principles for repetitive stress injuries, there are a number of things Neal can try to relieve his pain and continue hiking:

- Take one or more rest days.
- Decrease daily mileage by at least five miles.
- Take more, and longer rest stops.
- Stretch and massage the plantar fascia at the start of the day, during rest stops, and at the end of the day.
- Ice or soak in cold water when the opportunity presents itself.
- Improvise an arch support from a foam sleeping pad or similar foam and tape to the boot's insole. The arch support should run the full length of the fascia. Neal may need to use two layers of foam; the top layer will be smaller than the bottom layer.
- Use commercial or improvised trekking poles to take pressure off his feet, especially going downhill.

