

Windlass Test

Patient's full name: _____ Date accomplished: _____

Clinician's full name: _____

What you need

- A comfortable examination bed
- A stool

Instructions

- Tell the patient to lie down in a supine position (face up) on the examination table or bed. Make sure that their legs are straight.
- Next, tell the patient to dorsiflex their affected foot. Dorsiflex, in this context, means they have to point their affected foot upward.
- While the patient is dorsiflexing their affected foot, you will use one of your hands to grasp the foot's big toe.
- Pull back the big toe towards the ankle to apply tension to the foot's Plantar Fascia.
- While you are pulling their big toe towards their ankle, use your other hand to palpate the medial arch of the affected foot. Your objective with this hand is to feel for any changes in the shape of the arch.
- Once you've felt what you needed to feel from the arch, let go of the foot and tell your patient to relax their foot and un-dorsiflex it.
- Repeat these steps with the other foot.
- After repeating these steps with the other foot, conduct this test again while the person is seated on the examination table/bed.
- Repeat this test again, this time while the patient is standing on a stool. While standing up, make sure that their first metatarsal is on the edge of the stool so that you have room to pull up their big toe.

Test result: Positive Negative

The test is **negative** if there is an increase in tension in the Plantar Fascia, and you can observe that the arch of the foot rises as you pull back the big toe. The arch should become more pronounced. This means that the Plantar Fascia is generating enough tension to support the arch.

The test is **positive** if there is no increase in tension or there is not enough tension in the Plantar Fascia to lift the arch of the foot, meaning the arch of the foot is just flat or collapsed. If the patient also feels pain in the metatarsal, arch, or heel as you conduct this test, the results are positive.

Additional notes