



# Bunions

Treatment for toe deformities



A step-by-step guide to causes, concerns and proper treatment **for your feet**

FOOTWEAR + ORTHOTICS



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## Bunions

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Bunions are formed when a foot over-pronates causing the big toe to deviate inwards and sit in a higher position than it should.

Momentum then forces toe-off through the medial axis of the big toe joint, causing excess pressure and friction. Joint changes are the natural result.

While bunions may appear to "run in the family", actual bunion formation is not hereditary

What is actually inherited is the foot type and mechanics that lead to bunions. Proper management and correction of these mechanics can reduce the chance of bunion formation, or reduce the pain of existing deformities.

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# Bunions

The big toe of the foot is called the Hallux. When the Hallux begins to deviate inward in the direction of the baby toe, this condition is called "Hallux Valgus". As the toe moves more in this direction, a bony prominence starts to develop on the outside of the big toe, over the metatarsal bone. This is called a **bunion**.

## Symptoms

Symptoms can start with pain at the joint at the base of the big toe. This can be accompanied by redness or swelling and eventually the big toe begins to change shape, curving inwards.

## Causes

**Hallux Valgus occurs as a result of excessive, prolonged pressure on the forefoot. the pressure can come from many different avenues:**

- ▶ **Foot Mechanics:** A foot that pronates, or rolls inward, has a greater chance of developing Hallux Valgus as the foot creates an imbalance between the muscles and tendons around the big toe joint.
- ▶ **Muscle Factors:** Rigid or tight intrinsic toe muscles and tendons can lead to a compromised gait, putting more pressure on the outside area of the big toe as you push off.
- ▶ **Footwear:** Shoes that are too narrow can put excessive pressure on the big toe area, as well as the forward tilting effect that high heels have on your feet.
- ▶ **Individual:** Although bunions are not necessarily hereditary, genetics can make you more susceptible to developing bunions. It is not inevitable however, as it is the foot type, not the bunion that is inherited and measures are available to prevent bunion formation.

## Treatments

**Treatment depends on the degree of deformity. The only way to actually remove a bunion is through surgery, however there are other treatments:**

- ✓ For relief of pain, bunion cushions and shields are sometimes effective.
- ✓ Wearing shoes with a wide and deep toe box allows room for the bunion, easing pressure on it.
- ✓ Custom-made orthotics can redistribute pressure, relieving the bunion as well as stopping it from progressing.
- ✓ Hallux Valgus night splints are also an over the counter option, as they stretch tight tendons and intrinsic toe muscles overnight, sometimes resulting in the correction of Hallux Valgus.
- ✓ Toe separators can be worn during the day and at night to stretch the intrinsic muscles of the big toe to relieve pressure on the bunion.



**Over-the-Counter and Custom Toe Separators**



**Hallux Valgus Night Splints**



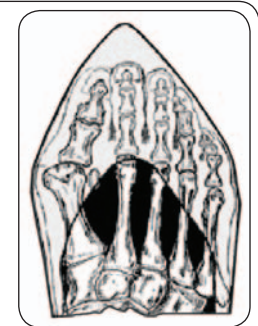
**Custom-made Orthotics**



## Bunion Surgery

To remove a bunion for the long term, a combination of a bunionectomy and an osteotomy must be performed. By breaking the bone and moving the toe into a new position, the toe will be straightened. Next, the bone in the foot will be shaved down on the medial side, removing the bunion.

The bones may, or may not, be held together with a screw or special staple until they heal together. A plaster cast is put on the foot to hold the big toe in its new position. the foot will be in a plaster approximately six weeks, but residual swelling for up to two months can sometimes persist after correction. Check with your doctor if you are considering surgery.



Bunion Formation can be significantly accelerated by inappropriate shoes

*helping people stay active,  
on their feet, for life*