



## Arthritis

Arthritis is a disease characterised by the inflammation of the cartilage and lining of the body's joints. Inflammation causes redness, warmth, pain and swelling. The primary targets for arthritis are people over the age of 50. Arthritis is a major cause of foot pain because each foot has 33 joints that can become affected by the disease.

Severe arthritis can restrict your mobility and limit your quality of life, but with proper treatment, you can slow the development of arthritis and lead a more productive life.



Podiatry & Foot Healthcare

[www.wefixfeet.co.uk](http://www.wefixfeet.co.uk)

# What causes Arthritis?

There are many causes of arthritis. Heredity plays a major role. However, arthritic symptoms can develop due to other factors. Forefoot problems such as hammer toes, claw toes, mallet toes, and bunions often develop as a result of arthritis. Problems can also develop in the heel and ankle area due to the erosion of the involved joints. There are many different types of arthritis.

- **Osteoarthritis** - this is the most common type of arthritis. Osteoarthritis causes excessive strain and the wearing away of cartilage in the joints of the foot. Movement becomes very difficult and painful. The pain and swelling worsens while standing or walking. Stiffness usually occurs after rest.
- **Gout** - another form of arthritis that also leads to foot complications. Excess uric acid crystals form in and around the joints in the foot. The big toe joint is often the focal point due to the stresses it experiences during walking and other weight bearing activities. Severe pain in the big toe is common and men are more likely to develop gouty arthritis than women.
- **Rheumatoid Arthritis** - Rheumatoid arthritis is the most crippling form of the disease that can affect people of all ages, with no known cause. Severe deformities of the joints with associated fatigue of the entire body are common. People living with Rheumatoid Arthritis often develop severe forefoot problems such as bunions, hammer toes, claw toes, and others.

## Treatment and Prevention of Arthritis

Conservative treatment (non-surgical treatment) of the arthritic foot includes proper footwear, orthotics, and/or forefoot supports. Arthritic footwear should provide the following benefits:

- High, wide toe box (high and wide space in the toe area)
- Removable insoles for fitting flexibility and the option to insert orthotics if necessary.
- Rocker Soles designed to facilitate ambulating (walking) and to reduce stress and pain at the ball-of-the-foot.

Arthritic footwear should also accommodate swelling of the foot. Orthotics designed to provide comfort, support and extra cushioning are also recommended.

The wearing of proper footwear and orthotics will reduce pressure to provide a comfortable and healthy environment for the foot.

Forefoot supports such as gel toe caps, gel toe shields, gel toe straighteners and other devices can often provide relief.



[www.wefixfeet.co.uk](http://www.wefixfeet.co.uk)

The general information provided here does not constitute medical advice. You should consult with a suitably qualified foot health care clinician. Please contact your nearest *We Fix Feet* clinic to book your consultation.