



Metatarsalgia

Metatarsalgia is a common overuse injury. The general term describes pain and inflammation in the ball of the foot - across the metatarsal area.

It is often thought of as a symptom of other conditions, rather than as a specific disease.



Podiatry & Foot Healthcare

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What causes Metatarsalgia?

The primary symptom of metatarsalgia is pain at the end of one or more of the metatarsal bones. The pain may be aggravated when walking or running. Athletes who participate in high-impact activities and may also have an inflammatory condition such as bursitis often have diffuse forefoot and mid-foot pain.

Most often, the pain develops over a period of months, rather than suddenly.

Anything which puts extra stress on the front of the foot can cause metatarsalgia. Common examples are:

- being overweight
- wearing high-heeled shoes
- certain foot shapes such as a high-arched "cavus" foot in which the bones in the front of the foot (metatarsals) point down into the sole excessively, or a long metatarsal bone which takes extra pressure
- claw or hammer toes which press the metatarsals down to the ground
- a stiff ankle which cannot be drawn up to right angles with the leg but points the foot down to the ground.

Treatment and Prevention of Metatarsalgia

Conservative measures, such as resting, changing shoes or using a metatarsal gel pad, might be all that is needed to relieve signs and symptoms of Metatarsalgia. To help ease your metatarsalgia pain, try these tips:

- Rest - Protect your foot from further injury by not stressing it. Elevate your foot after standing or walking. You may need to avoid your favourite sport for a while, but you can stay fit with low-impact exercises, such as swimming or cycling.
- Ice the affected area. Apply ice packs to the affected area for about 20 minutes at a time several times a day. Protect your skin and wrap the ice packs in a thin towel.
- Consider over-the-counter pain relief, such as ibuprofen to reduce pain and inflammation.
- Wear proper shoes. Avoid too-tight or too-loose shoes and limit the wearing of high heels. Wear shoes appropriate to the sports you play.
- Use metatarsal pads or arch supports. These are placed in your shoes to help deflect stress from the painful area and provide support to the arches of your feet.



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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.