

North Perth

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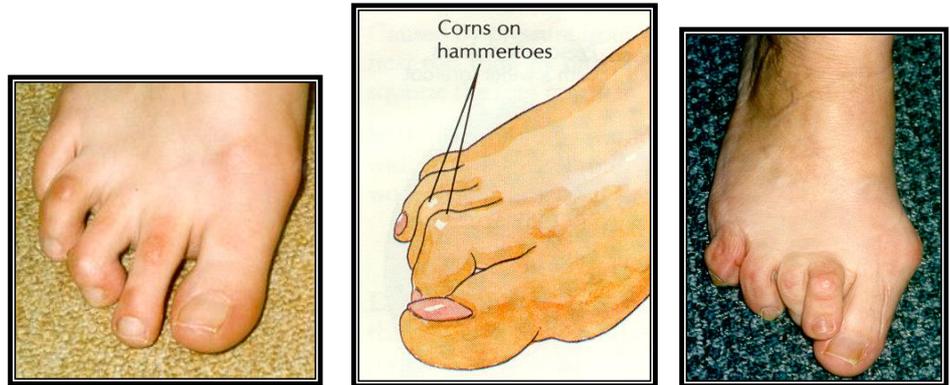
Mt Lawley

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Clawed/Hammer Toes

Description

A contracted toe is often termed a clawed, mallet or hammertoe. This depends on the level and the amount of flexibility that the deformity displays. In simple terms it is best described as a buckling of the toe. This is a common condition and causes problems when footwear rubs on the top of the toes producing corns or callus. The tips of the toes may also be affected due to ground contact.



Incidence

Clawed/hammer toes are common in people who have a family history of the deformity. Women are more prone to having discomfort, most likely due to poor footwear. Wearing narrow, tight, confining or high-heeled shoes can greatly accelerate the formation of clawed toes and associated corns. Men may have trouble in certain sports footwear or work wear. Hammertoes are often associated with a bunion.

Symptoms

- Redness, inflammation, pain and/or stiffness top of toes
- Pain around the "balls" of the feet due to retraction of toes causing dysfunction
- Possible associated bunion
- Calluses and corns at the toes and/or the ball of the foot
- There may be overlapping toes
- Inflammation around the joints of the toes and possible fluid under the skin around the joint (bursitis)
- Skin over the toe joints may breakdown causing an ulceration which can become infected
- Toenails may become thickened or distorted

Causes

- Foot mechanics – pronated/flat feet producing tendon imbalance.
- Family history
- Poor/tight footwear – particularly in those already predisposed
- Rheumatoid and other arthritic conditions
- Neurological problems effecting muscles of the lower leg



CentrePod
PODIATRY

Foot Surgery Centre

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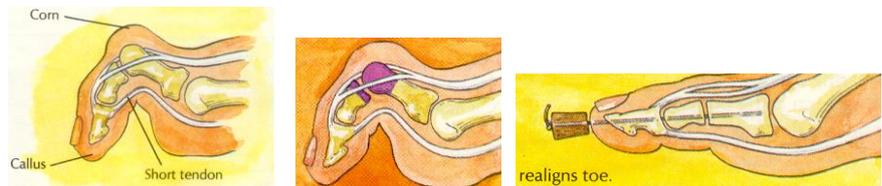
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Treatment

Treatments vary depending on the severity of pain and deformity. The main goal of early treatment is to diminish the progression of joint deformities, these include;

- Padding, strapping or toe splints
- Wearing correctly fitting footwear that have a wide and deep toe box
- Corns and calluses can be managed by Podiatric treatment.
- Foot orthoses. - For example, if flat feet are the cause, custom-made functional foot orthoses may be required to help support and control abnormal foot movement and make the foot more stable to assist in balancing the tendons, stabilising the joints and halting or slowing progression of the deformity.
- Surgery – When conservative treatment does not provide satisfactory relief from symptoms, or when the condition interferes with activities, surgery may be necessary. Evaluation by a podiatric surgeon should be sought at the first sign of pain or discomfort, so that severe deformity can be avoided.

Dr Nick Marino, Podiatric Surgeon can assist you with this.



Diagrams indicating correction of deformity with utilisation of joint remodelling and temporary wire to maintain position while healing.

Photos below display before and immediately after correction; note the change in position of toes and nail alignment.

