

Hallux Valgus Deformity

BUNIONS



DEFINITION

Hallux Abducto Valgus deformity or more commonly known as bunion complex, is possibly the most common painful deformity of the big toe. It is the lateral (valgus) deviation of the big toe on the first metatarsal. It is usually associated with enlargement of the first metatarsal head due to bony remodeling and inflammation of the bursa (swelling at the base of the big toe); often as the big toe shifts it overlaps the second toe. The swollen metatarsal head can often be very painful and may limit footwear choice, as the sufferer attempts to reduce pressure on the joint by buying wider shoes.

CAUSES

There are many possible causes of bunions which include but are not limited to biomechanical, traumatic and metabolic factors.

Biomechanical instability appears to be the most common underlying cause, such factors as, flexible/rigid pes planus (flat feet), short first metatarsal, general hyper-mobility and over pronation (feet roll inwards) are often evident in this deformity. If the foot is sufficiently unstable and pronated the metatarsal will drift medially and the big toe will shift laterally.

Traumatic factors such as fractures, dislocations and sprains around the first metatarsophalangeal joint (big toe joint) often result in mal-alignment and deformity.



Metabolic conditions such as gouty arthritis and rheumatoid arthritis can result in bunion formation. Also connective tissue disorders such as Marfan's syndrome can further place the foot at risk of developing a bunion.

Contrary to popular belief ill fitting footwear or high heels are not the cause of bunions. However they may place the foot at further risk and accelerate the development of a bunion.

TREATMENT

Treatment depends on the severity of deformity, age of sufferer and symptoms. Early diagnosis by your Podiatrist is critical, conservative treatment via appropriate supportive footwear, orthotics and insoles aimed at reducing biomechanical factors such as pronation can be very beneficial. A Realign Performance innersole such as the Realign Advantage, help support the arch and reduce pronation. Exercises and anti-inflammatory medication can help reduce symptoms. Surgical correction of severe deformity is also an option.