

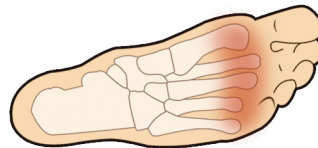
Metatarsalgia



Metatarsalgia is a relatively common condition that results in low grade, but persistent pain in the ball of the foot. Most sufferers describe metatarsalgia as a burning, widespread feeling that increases along with the duration of time spent on one's feet. Oddly, metatarsalgia does not present as a pathological injury where something has torn or ruptured, but as a low grade in inflammatory response to excessive pressure and friction.

Metatarsalgia can be quite a debilitating condition that sees sufferers relatively pain free when they start walking or standing on their feet, but after a period of time a burning sensation slowly increases to a point where the sufferer needs to remove their footwear, sit down or ice their feet. Often this burning sensation can intensify, develop into neurological sensations such as pins and needles and numbness.

If untreated, metatarsalgia can develop into more sinister and long term injuries such as stress fractures, tendon and ligament tears or ruptures and permanent loss of sensation in the feet. Primarily, the condition is caused by a biomechanical deficiency of the transverse arch in the forefoot. The excess pressure and friction is transferred through the ball of the foot instead of being absorbed through the stabilising function of the foot structures.



Metatarsalgia is further exacerbated by wearing shoes with an excessive heel height, wearing shoes with a lack of forefoot padding and/or shoes that are too narrow or that do not flex adequately in the forefoot.

Unfortunately, metatarsalgia can affect a wide variety of people, however the groups most at risk include; ladies walking extended periods in heeled footwear, people running in old or inappropriate footwear, the elderly who lose their natural forefoot fatty padding and those people in occupations requiring extended periods of standing such as the retail and manufacturing industries.

From a treatment point of view, initially it is very important to ensure your footwear offers adequate fit and are designed for the activity you are using them for. Secondly, a cushioned innersole that focuses a higher amount of forefoot padding and friction reducing capabilities such as the Realign Shoxx, Workforce Elite or Barefoot Gel placed in your work and sport shoes will help alleviate your symptoms. Finally, if your pain worsens or does not settle appropriately after a period of 4-6 weeks of introducing new footwear or a cushioning innersole, then ensure you have your symptoms assessed and treated appropriately by a Podiatrist.