

Bunions

Bunions are often described as a bump on the side of the big toe. But a bunion is more than that. The visible bump actually reflects changes in the bony framework of the front part of the foot. With a bunion the big toe leans toward the second toe, rather than pointing straight ahead. This throws the bones out of alignment, producing the bunion's "bump."

Bunions are a progressive disorder. They begin with a leaning of the big toe, gradually changing the angle of the bones over the years and slowly producing the characteristic bump, which continues to become increasingly prominent. Usually the symptoms of bunions appear at later stages, although some people never have symptoms.

There are many factors which can contribute to the development of a bunion, the most common causes include genetic factors, poor foot mechanics, high-heeled or narrow footwear and trauma to the toe.

Symptoms occur most often when wearing shoes that crowd the toes, shoes with a tight toe box or high heels. This may explain why women are more likely to have symptoms than men. In addition, spending long periods of time on your feet can aggravate the symptoms of bunions.

Bunions do not generally get better if left untreated. Early treatments are aimed at easing the pain of bunions, but they won't reverse the deformity itself. Treatment options may include:

Footwear Education and Modification. Wearing the right kind of shoes is very important. Recommendations are that the forefoot easily fits within the width of the shoe and there is adequate cushioning and arch support. Soft materials such as smooth leather, suede or fabric will also help to reduce irritation to the area.

Padding. The use of pads and cushions to reduce the pressure over



the bone can also be helpful for mild bunion deformities. Pads placed over the area of the bunion can help minimise pain.

Activity Modifications. Avoid activity that causes bunion pain, including standing for long periods of time.

Strengthening and Stretching Exercises. To maintain joint mobility and prevent stiffness or arthritis

Medications. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, may help to relieve pain.

Icing. Applying an ice pack several times a day helps reduce inflammation and pain.

Orthotic Devices. Podiatrists can prescribe customised orthotic devices that help reduce the stress on a bunion and control biomechanical factors which cause them.

When is Surgery Needed? When the pain of a bunion interferes with daily activities, it's time to discuss surgical options with your Podiatrist. Together you can decide if surgery is best for you.

S-T-R-E-T-C-H Of The Month Lower Leg Stretch

The peroneal muscles run down the outside of the lower leg and are difficult to stretch and so often neglected in a stretching routine.

1. Sit in a chair with one ankle resting on the other knee.
2. With your hands, point the foot (plantarflex) and turn the sole of the foot upwards (invert).
3. Hold for between 10 and 30 seconds.

TOWARDS WELLNESS Benefits of Exercise

Exercise releases feel-good endorphins and it's a hard feeling to beat. Twenty minutes of exercise a day or three to four hours per week is what you should be aiming for at the very least. If you're in an exercise slump, consider ways to change your routine around. Find a fit buddy to motivate you to make those early morning classes, or go for a run or a brisk walk at lunchtime. You'll get some time out of the office and work up a sweat. Winning!



103 ROWAN STREET, WANGARATTA

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Tuesday 8.30am - 6.30pm
Wednesday 8.30am - 5.30pm
Thursday 8.30am - 7.00pm
Friday 8.30am - 5.00pm

47 - 51 NUNN STREET, BENALLA

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