

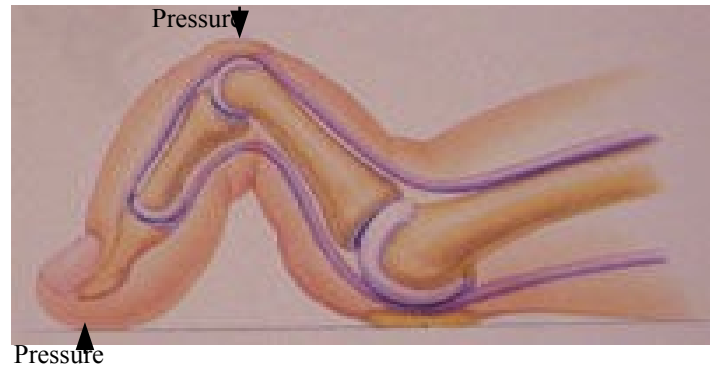
HAMMER TOES

DEFINITION

A **Hammer Toe** is a toe that is contracted at the proximal inter-phalangeal joint (middle joint in the toe) – it can lead to severe pressure points from footwear, pain and calluses.



Hammer Toe with corn developing



Hammer Toe deformity

SYMPTOMS

- Pain or discomfort caused by pressure on the dorsal (top) aspect of the toe
- Callousing, the development of a corn and stiffening on the proximal inter-phalangeal joint
- Inflammation of the affected toe

CAUSES

Hammer Toes result from a muscle imbalance causing the ligaments and tendons in the toe to tighten. This leads to a contracted inter-phalangeal joint (i.e. causing the toe's joints to curl downwards). This deformity may be seen in any toe except the big toe.

TYPES

Hammer Toes are classified based on the mobility of the joints affected. There are 2 types:

- Flexible: The joint has the ability to move and can be straightened manually
- Rigid: The joint has very limited movement and can be extremely painful

TREATMENT

FOOT ORTHOTICS

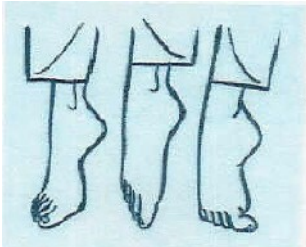
Foot Orthotics are most commonly prescribed to help relieve pressure on Hammer Toes. They allow the toes and joints of the forefoot to function more appropriately and therefore reduce pain. Silicone toe splints can also help alleviate symptoms. Your Orthotist can give you the best treatment options.

FOOTWEAR

Changing the type of footwear worn is a very important step in the treatment of Hammer Toes. When choosing a shoe, make sure the toe box (area around the toes) is high and wide enough to provide room to accommodate the Hammer Toes. A low heel height reduces the transfer of weight onto the toes and allows a more even weight-bearing distribution pattern throughout the entire foot. Hammer Toe crests and splints help to hold down the hammer toe, and are considered conservative treatment options.

FOOT EXERCISES

There are some foot exercises shown below that you can do at home to stretch and strengthen the muscles in your foot. You can do these exercises while you watch television or after a shower. These can be done to prevent worsening the condition.



Toe raise, toe point, toe curl: Hold each position for 5 seconds and repeat 10 times (non-weight bearing)



Towel curls: Place a small towel on the floor and curl it toward you, using only your toes. Relax, repeat x 5.



Marble pick-up: Place 20 marbles on the floor and pick up one at a time with your toes, placing each in a bowl.

SURGICAL OPTIONS

If the Hammer Toe is very painful or permanent, surgery is recommended:

- Tenoplasty and / or Capsulotomy: Respectively refers to the release or lengthening of tightened tendons and ligaments that have caused the joint to contract
- Bone Arthroplasty: Another surgical procedure, which involves the removal of some bone and cartilage at the affected joint. It eliminates pressure on the toe, relieving pain and straightening the digit

Ask your Complete Feet Practitioner about YOUR options.

For more information phone: 1300 668 117