

Podiatry In Motion

Bay Area Foot Care

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For a happy walk!

Flat Feet?

Typically, when you look at an adult foot, you will notice an upward curve (arch) in the middle. This arch is formed by tight bands that attach at the foot and heel bones, called tendons. The forming of an arch is related to several tendons in your lower leg and feet working together. When these tendons do not pull together properly, the end result is little to no arch in the feet. This is called fallen arch or flat foot.

Causes

A variety of factors can cause adults to form flat feet. The most common include the following:

- An abnormality present at birth
- Torn or stretched tendons
- Swelling or damage of the posterior tibial tendon that connects your lower leg, along your ankle to the middle of the arch

- Dislocated or broken bones
- Nerve problems
- Health conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis

Symptoms

Some possible symptoms of flat feet include:

- Feet tire easily
- Achy or painful feet
- Swelling of your feet on the inside bottom
- Difficult foot movement, such as standing on your toes
- Leg and back pain

Should you notice any of these symptoms, you should seek the advice of your podiatrist.

Treatment

In cases where there are no symptoms, treatment is likely not needed.

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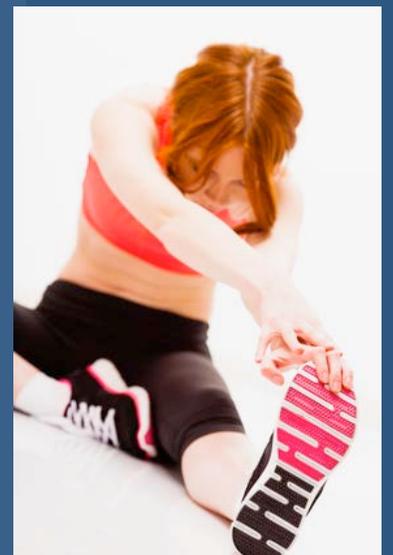
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Watch out for difficult foot movements

Flat Feet?

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If you are experiencing any symptoms, some treatments your podiatrist may suggest are:

- Ice and rest to relieve discomfort and decrease swelling
- Stretching exercises
- Medications for pain relief, such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs)
- Physical therapy
- Orthotics- Devices to provide support, such as casts, braces and shoe modifications
- Injected medications to decrease swelling and inflammation, such as corticosteroids

In severe cases, surgical options may be discussed too. In addition, there are some remedies you could use at home to prevent or manage any pain associated with flat feet.



Avoid running on pavements if you have flat feet

Home Remedies

- Be sure your footwear or shoe inserts are appropriate for your activity.
- Speak to your podiatrist about stretches you can do to prepare yourself for foot-intensive activities.
- Decrease or treat risk factors that can worsen this condition; such as high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity.
- Avoid activities that excessively stress your feet, such as running on pavements.
- Avoid sports that are considered high-impact; such as hockey, soccer, tennis and basketball.
- Be proactive and seek help from your podiatrist when pain is severe or it begins to interfere with activities.
- When discomfort occurs, utilize rest, ice and over-the-counter NSAIDs, such as ibuprofen.

Since most of us live life on-the-go, you need to pay attention to your feet- look out for any discomfort and symptoms, and seek the advice of your podiatrist if you have any concern.

Ultimately, healthy feet are essential for staying on top of your everyday activities! ♦

Coping With Diabetic Foot Ulcers

Diabetes mellitus has a prevalence of about 15 percent. Diabetic foot ulcers are common among people with diabetes, affecting between five and ten percent of patients.

Risk Factors for Diabetic Foot Ulcers

1) Possibly the most common, yet avoidable factor, is wearing poorly fitting shoes. Footwear that is too tight causes undue pressure on the feet.

This gives rise to the development of blisters and sores. On the other hand, shoes that are too large may bring about sores as well. If the shoes are not a good fit, this can cause unnecessary motion leading to friction and damage to the skin on the feet.

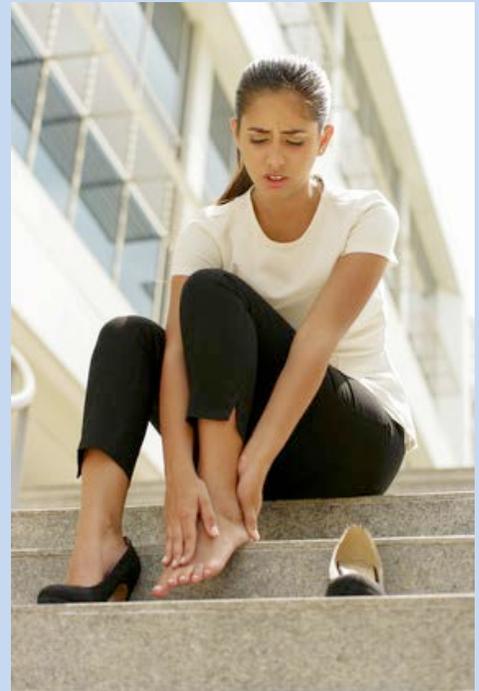
2) Fungal infections, such as athlete's foot, is another risk factor. It commonly forms in between the toes when moisture is trapped in the area.

Fungus can lead to itching, cracking, and skin peeling, thus increasing the likelihood of developing infection and foot ulcers.

3) Even a simple ingrown toenail may lead to serious problems. If blood glucose is uncontrolled, the result can be poor wound healing. This can spread to the rest of the foot, increasing the risk for infection and gangrene.

4) Smoking is also a risk factor. Diabetic foot is mainly caused by improper blood circulation. In patients who smoke, this reduces the amount of oxygen reaching the tissues, thus causing poor healing of wounds and greater chance for ulcer development.

5) **Peripheral neuropathy** or loss of sensation in the extremities results in foot sores going unnoticed. This is a common problem because it is estimated that about 60 to 70 percent of people with diabetes have some form of neuropathy.



Poorly fitting shoes are a risk factor for diabetic foot ulcers

Peripheral artery disease or narrowing of the peripheral arteries affects the lower extremities. Circulation is drastically decreased, causing pain or cramping in the legs while walking.

This is quite common among people with diabetes, yet often goes undiagnosed. This significantly increases the risk of foot ulcers. If left untreated, peripheral artery disease can lead to gangrene and possibly even amputation.

Prevention and Care

Prevention of diabetic foot ulcers begins with controlling blood sugar levels.

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Coping With Diabetic Foot Ulcer (cont'd from previous page)

Furthermore, it is important for diabetic patients to practice proper foot care and do regular foot examinations- this is to ensure early detection of any ulcer or conditions.

Remember, when in doubt, always consult your podiatric physician! ♦

Special Thanks

Thanks for reading our newsletter; we hope you've gained valuable insights!

For any enquiries regarding foot care or injuries, do feel free to contact **Bay Area Foot Care** (see details left).

Thanks for your support!