

Bunions (Hallux Valgus)

Explanation of Diagnosis

A bunion is a **bony bump** that forms at the base of the big toe due to **misalignment of the joint**. Over time, the big toe drifts toward the smaller toes, causing **pain, swelling, redness, and difficulty wearing shoes**. Bunions develop from **genetics, improper footwear (tight shoes, high heels), arthritis, or excessive pressure on the foot**.

Specific Work Modifications

- **Avoid prolonged standing or walking on hard surfaces.**
- **Wear wide, supportive shoes** with a soft toe box to reduce pressure.
- **Use orthotic inserts or bunion pads** for cushioning.
- **Take sitting breaks** if the job requires extended standing.
- **Avoid tight or narrow footwear**, which can worsen symptoms.

Specific Activity Modifications

- **Avoid high-impact activities** like running, jumping, or dancing on hard surfaces.
- **Modify workouts** by switching to **low-impact exercises** such as swimming, cycling, or elliptical training.
- **Wear proper athletic shoes with arch support** if engaging in sports.
- **Limit barefoot walking**, especially on hard floors.

Recommended Supplements

- **Collagen peptides (10 g daily)** - Supports joint and ligament health.
- **Vitamin D3 (1000-2000 IU daily)** - Aids in bone and joint health.
- **Calcium (1000-1200 mg daily)** - Strengthens bones and prevents further misalignment.
- **Magnesium (300-400 mg daily)** - Helps with muscle relaxation and foot cramps.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids (1000 mg daily)** - Reduces joint inflammation.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration

Diet Recommendations:

- **Bone-supporting foods:** Dairy products, almonds, leafy greens, and fortified cereals for calcium.
- **Anti-inflammatory foods:** Fatty fish (salmon, sardines), turmeric, berries, and walnuts.
- **Protein-rich foods:** Chicken, eggs, lentils, and dairy to support joint health.

- **Limit processed foods, excess sugar, and alcohol**, which can worsen inflammation.

Hydration Tips:

- **Drink at least 2-3 liters of water daily** to maintain joint lubrication.
- **Limit caffeine and alcohol**, which can dehydrate tissues and slow recovery.

Home Exercise Prescription

Perform **2-3 times daily** to improve foot flexibility, reduce pain, and strengthen the arch:

1. Toe Stretch

- Sit down and gently pull the big toe **back toward the ankle**.
- Hold **20-30 seconds, repeat 3 times per foot**.

2. Towel Scrunches (Arch Strengthening)

- Place a towel on the floor and use your toes to **scrunch it toward you**.
- **10 reps, 2 times daily**.

3. Toe Spreading Exercise

- Place **toe spacers** or spread the toes apart manually.
- Hold **for 10-15 seconds, repeat 3 times**.

4. Rolling Massage with a Ball

- Use a **tennis ball or frozen water bottle** under the foot and roll it gently back and forth.
- **1-2 minutes per foot, 1-2 times daily**.

5. Calf Stretch (Straight & Bent Knee)

- Stand facing a wall and place one foot back to stretch the calf.
- **Hold for 20-30 seconds, repeat 3 times per leg**.

Avoid tight shoes, high heels, and high-impact activities until pain resolves.

Helpful Books

1. "Every Woman's Guide to Foot Pain Relief: The New Science of Healthy Feet" - Katy Bowman
2. "Fixing Your Feet: Injury Prevention and Treatment for Athletes" - John Vonhof

Click here for more orthopedic patient information.

Contact a Key West orthopedic clinic or reach out to Dr. Jason Pirozzolo.