

Foot Arthritis

Explanation of Diagnosis

Foot arthritis occurs when the **cartilage in the joints of the foot breaks down**, leading to **pain, stiffness, swelling, and reduced mobility**. It most commonly affects the **big toe (hallux rigidus), midfoot, or ankle joints**. Causes include **aging, previous injuries, obesity, overuse, or inflammatory conditions like rheumatoid arthritis**.

Specific Work Modifications

- **Avoid prolonged standing or walking on hard surfaces.**
- **Use cushioned, supportive shoes** with good arch support and a wide toe box.
- **Consider orthotic inserts** to reduce pressure on arthritic joints.
- **Take sitting breaks** and elevate the feet when possible.
- **Avoid tight or unsupportive footwear**, which can worsen symptoms.

Specific Activity Modifications

- **Avoid high-impact activities** like running, jumping, or prolonged walking on hard surfaces.
- **Modify exercise routines** by switching to **low-impact activities** such as swimming, cycling, or elliptical training.
- **Wear proper footwear** with good support if engaging in sports.
- **Use ice or heat therapy** after activity to manage pain and stiffness.

Recommended Supplements

- **Glucosamine & Chondroitin (1500 mg/1200 mg daily)** - Supports joint cartilage.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids (1000 mg daily)** - Reduces inflammation and stiffness.
- **Collagen peptides (10 g daily)** - Helps maintain joint and ligament health.
- **Vitamin D3 (1000-2000 IU daily)** - Supports bone and joint health.
- **Magnesium (300-400 mg daily)** - Aids in muscle relaxation and recovery.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration

Diet Recommendations:

- **Anti-inflammatory foods:** Fatty fish (salmon, sardines), turmeric, berries, walnuts, and leafy greens.
- **Joint-supporting foods:** Bone broth, citrus fruits, bell peppers, and nuts.
- **Protein-rich foods:** Chicken, eggs, lentils, and dairy to support tissue repair.
- **Limit processed foods, refined sugars, and excess alcohol**, which can worsen

inflammation.

Hydration Tips:

- **Drink 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 joints:

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. Arch Strengthening (Towel Scrunches)

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

3. Ankle Mobility Exercise

- Rotate the ankle in **circular motions** (clockwise and counterclockwise).
- **10 reps each direction, 2 times daily**.

4. Calf Stretch (Straight & Bent Knee)

- Stand facing a wall, place one foot back, and keep the heel on the ground.
- **Hold for 20-30 seconds, repeat 3 times per leg**.

5. 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**.

Avoid high-impact activities, tight shoes, and prolonged standing until symptoms improve.

Helpful Books

1. "Arthritis Without Pain: The Miracle of TNF Blockers" - Scott J. Zashin, MD
2. "Every Woman's Guide to Foot Pain Relief: The New Science of Healthy Feet" - Katy Bowman

Click here for more orthopedic patient information.

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