

Morton's Neuroma

Explanation of Diagnosis

Morton's neuroma is a **thickening of the tissue around the nerves** leading to the toes, most commonly between the **third and fourth toes**. It is caused by **compression or irritation of the nerve**, often due to **tight shoes, high-impact activities, or abnormal foot mechanics**. Symptoms include **burning pain, numbness, tingling, or the sensation of a "pebble" in the shoe**.

Specific Work Modifications

- **Avoid prolonged standing or walking on hard surfaces.**
- **Wear wide, cushioned shoes** with a soft toe box to reduce nerve compression.
- **Use orthotic inserts or metatarsal pads** to relieve pressure on the nerve.
- **Take sitting breaks** if the job requires extended walking or standing.
- **Avoid tight, narrow, or high-heeled shoes**, which can worsen symptoms.

Specific Activity Modifications

- **Avoid high-impact activities** such as running, jumping, or sports requiring tight footwear.
- **Modify workouts** by switching to **low-impact exercises** such as cycling, swimming, or elliptical training.
- **Use shock-absorbing insoles** if engaging in sports or walking long distances.
- **Avoid barefoot walking**, especially on hard floors.

Recommended Supplements

- **Vitamin B6 (50-100 mg daily)** - Supports nerve health.
- **Alpha-lipoic acid (600 mg daily)** - May help with nerve regeneration.
- **Magnesium (300-400 mg daily)** - Aids in muscle relaxation and nerve function.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids (1000 mg daily)** - Reduces nerve inflammation.
- **Turmeric (500 mg twice daily)** - Provides anti-inflammatory benefits.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration

Diet Recommendations:

- **Anti-inflammatory foods:** Fatty fish (salmon, sardines), turmeric, berries, nuts, and leafy greens.
- **Nerve-supporting foods:** Avocados, eggs, dark chocolate, almonds, and whole grains (rich in B vitamins).

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

Hydration Tips:

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

Home Exercise Prescription

Perform **2-3 times daily** to relieve nerve compression and improve foot strength:

1. Toe Spread & Splay Exercise

- Place your foot flat on the ground and try to spread your toes apart.
- Hold **for 5 seconds, repeat 10 reps per foot.**

2. Metatarsal Doming (Arch Strengthening)

- Try to lift the arch of your foot without curling your toes.
- Hold **for 5 seconds, repeat 10 reps per foot.**

3. 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.**

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. Towel Scrunches (Toe Strengthening)

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

Avoid tight shoes, high-impact activities, and excessive foot pressure until symptoms improve.

Helpful Books

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

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