

# Hallux Limitus

## Body Part

Big toe joint (1st Metatarsophalangeal joint)

## Condition:

Hallux Limitus is a condition of the big toe joint where the movement becomes restricted. The big toe joint or 1st Metatarsophalangeal joint (1st MPJ) is important in walking and running thus restrictions to it can cause implications at the site of restriction or in other parts of the foot.

## Summary

Restriction can either be functional or structural.

A functional hallux limitus (FHL) is where there's normal movement in the toe when the patient is not standing, but becomes restricted once standing occurs. This is due to certain mechanics of the foot.

A structural hallux limitus (SHL) is when there's a partial blockage in the structure of the joint. A person may have limited movement in both weight bearing and non-weight bearing.

Both SHL and FHL can initially seem non problematic but can cause joint space narrowing and thus into painful arthritis at a later stage.

## Causes:

- Different foot anatomy.
  - Variations in feet with longer 1st Metatarsals (long bone in your foot), prevent the joint from functioning properly
- Injury.
  - Injuries, such as severely stubbing your toe, toe sprains, or a broken toe, can damage the joint and contribute to hallux limitus.
- Overuse.
  - Participating in activities or occupations that involve repeated pressure on your toes can lead to damage from overuse.
- Incorrect footwear.
  - Frequently wearing high heels or narrow shoes places additional stress on your toe joint.
- Family history.
  - Having a family member with hallux limitus increases your risk for developing it.
- Arthritic disorders.

- Certain types of arthritis can change your foot's movement, such as gout, osteoarthritis, and rheumatoid arthritis.

### Symptoms:

Symptoms vary case by case depending at how much the condition has deteriorated. These include:

- Pain
  - usually at the top of your joint, that worsens with walking or other activities that bend the joint
- Trouble flexing your big toe
- A bony lump on the top of your big toe joint that may hurt when it rubs against your shoe
- Numbness or tingling
  - Occurs when nerves are compressed
- Corns and Calluses
  - Pressures on the bottom of the foot may increase causing painful skin lesions.

### Treatment:

- Taping
  - Short term improvement of mechanics
- Orthotics
  - Long term improvement of mechanics
- Splinting
  - To prevent abnormal movement through the joint during painful stages
- Mobilisation exercises
  - To encourage normal movement through the joint
- Topical or oral Anti-inflammatories
  - Pain management
- Heat packs
  - Symptom relief
- Footwear update/modification
  - Appropriate stiffened shoes assist in preventing the toe bending too much. Avoid narrow shoes or high heels.
- Exercise modification
  - In conjunction with your physio or podiatrist
- Surgery
  - In cases that keep deteriorating into severe arthritis surgery may be indicated.

### Prognosis:

Depending on your level of hallux limitus, pain reduction should be achieved within 1-2 weeks of treatment. If the recommendations of your podiatrist are followed then complete relief could be acquired within 4-6 weeks, but that is determined by the level of commitment from the patient as well as how far the condition has progressed.



### Further information:

For further information, please contact our friendly team at Gen Health.

Picture Link: <https://www.e-podi.com/hallux-limitus/>