



Capital District Podiatry, PLLC  
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## Structural Toe Problems

When you look down at your feet, you expect to see your five toes lined up in a natural manner and lying flat. If there is abnormal bending or toe misalignment, it's an indication of an existing problem—one that won't go away on its own!

### Toe deformities you should know include:

**Hammertoe.** In this condition, a toe—usually the one right next to the big toe—has an abnormal downward bend at the middle joint. This kind of makes it look like a hammer (which explains the name).

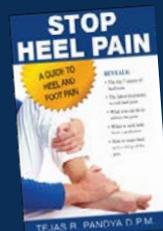
**Mallet toe.** Like with hammertoe, a mallet toe is one (also usually the second toe) featuring an abnormal bend. In this case, the bend is at the joint closest to the tip of the toe.

**Claw toe.** Whereas the previous conditions typically involve a single toe, claw toe typically happens to all four of the smaller toes. In this condition, there is an abnormal upwards toe bend at the first joint, along with downward bends at both of the other two toe joints.

**Bunion.** With a **bunion**, the abnormality isn't necessarily on the vertical plane. Rather, the big toe has an unusual inward angle, sometimes even pointing at the four smaller toes in more severe cases. On account of this angling, the joint at the base of toe starts jutting out into the inner edge of the foot—the source of the characteristic bump.

**Bunionette.** Essentially, a bunionette is a bunion that happens on the other side of the foot. Instead of the big toe being affected, it's the small one in this case.

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# Seek Help Early!

There are clearly differences between the respective conditions, but on similarity is the fact they are all considered to be “progressive.” This basically means they will continue to worsen over time when left unaddressed. Further, we may be able to resolve symptoms with conservative care, but surgery is the only way to truly correct them.

Accordingly, recognizing these conditions and seeking treatment early is necessary for keeping them from progressing too far!

Regarding possible conservative treatment options to slow progression and relieve painful symptoms, we may use any of the following:

1

### Medication.

We may prescribe or recommend certain medications for pain relief.

2

### Stretches.

In early cases, stretching exercises may keep tissue limber and prevent further progression.

3

### Padding.

Pads can be useful in preventing callusing and blisters when toe deformities affect shoe fit.

4

### Icing.

Applying ice to an affected toe can relieve pain.

5

### Orthotics.

Custom **orthotics** displace pressure from certain areas to keep the toe(s) from worsening.

## When is Surgery Necessary?

We exhaust conservative options when working to resolve your lower limb pain, even for toe deformities like these. In fact, surgery is typically reserved for cases that either cause severe pain or take away your ability to perform normal activities.

When surgery is recommended, you will find peace of mind knowing that we have been able to help many patients throughout the years with successful procedures. No matter what kind of treatment will best resolve the problem, you will find it here at Capital District Podiatry.

Remember, seeing us earlier for hammertoes, mallet toes, claw toes, and bunions—or any foot or ankle condition, actually—is always the right move!

Avoid the pain and frustration toe deformities can cause.  
Call us today at (518) 273-0053 and find the care you need!

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