



The Malvern Surgeries • 64 Worcester Road • Malvern • Worcestershire • WR14 4AB
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Mallet Toes

A mallet toe can best be described as abnormal flexion in the joint of the lesser nearest the nail. It can affect one toe or numerous lesser toes.

The causes of mallet toes are:

- 1) Inappropriate footwear
- 2) Flat feet
- 3) Highly arched feet
- 4) Hereditary factors
- 5) Bunions
- 6) Long second toe
- 7) Various diseases e.g. rheumatoid arthritis
- 8) Trauma such as stubbing the toe

Symptoms of mallet toes:

- 1) Mallet toes can be subject to cramping and on occasion can cause cramping within the foot or even the leg
- 2) A corn may form on top of the toe as a result of pressure from a shoe or on the end of the toe
- 3) Bursitis that is inflammation of a small sac of fluid under the skin and overlying the joint. The top of the joint will appear red and swollen
- 4) Ulceration can form particularly where the circulation is reduced



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- 5) Infection can be a complication of mallet toes particularly where general health is not good

Treatment and advice for mallet toes:

- 1) Consideration of footwear is very important. A deep toebox with soft leather uppers is ideal. With certain medical conditions customised shoes are often required
- 2) Good fitting hose which is not restrictive is advised
- 3) Certain types of felt padding can be used to reduce pressure loading
- 4) Applying an appropriate moisturising cream is often helpful
- 5) The use of silicones, which can be purchased pre-packed in the form of tubes
- 6) Podiatrists can mould silicone rubber to individual toes, which is often very successful
- 7) Routine footcare to address corns and callouses
- 8) Specific footcare for episodes of bursitis, ulceration or infection associated with mallet toes
- 9) Consideration of a surgical procedure such as an arthroplasty for a permanent solution.
- 10) Where there are numerous mallet toes and they are associated with biomechanical factors, orthoses can be very helpful in assisting with re-alignment, particularly for flexible mallet toes.