

## In This Issue

Preventing Running Injuries

Tackling Big Toe Pain

Watch Out for Old Injuries

## Preventing Running Injuries

Both long-distance runners and casual joggers can improve their performance by keeping their feet in top condition and taking steps to control foot problems common in runners. Runners' feet are the most vulnerable to injury, so it's important to take the proper steps to strengthen and condition them. Here are some common running injuries and how to avoid them.

**Heel Pain:** The most common complaint of foot pain is caused by inflammation of the ligament that holds up the arch, known as plantar fasciitis.

**Treat it By:** Doing stretching exercises, wear sturdier shoes with arch support, ice the foot, take anti-inflammatory medications and make an appointment with our office if the heel pain persists.

**Achilles Tendon Pain:** Tendonitis can occur in the Achilles tendon or other areas of the foot and ankle and serves as a warning sign of overuse. Overdoing it with training can cause tendonitis, especially in beginners who are doing too much too soon.

**Treat it By:** Resting, ice the foot, take anti-inflammatory medications and make an appointment with our office if the heel pain persists. If pain continues, visit our office and we can help with orthotics or physical therapy.

**Pain in Ball of Foot:** Pain in the area of the foot below the toes is often a neuroma—pinched nerve in between the toes—or inflammation of the joints where the toes meet the foot bones. This can cause pain, numbness and burning in the area.

**Treat it By:** Wear sturdier shoes with arch support or make an appointment with our office for padding, injections or orthotics to help relieve pain.



**Stress Fractures/Broken Bones:** Being able to walk on the foot doesn't mean it's not broken. Stress fractures can occur in the foot and be slower to show symptoms like swelling or pain.

**Treat it By: RICE** - Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation. If pain and swelling continues after three or four days of RICE, contact our office for further evaluation and a proper diagnosis.

## Tackling Big Toe Pain



Your big toe is an important part of the body. It helps to keep our balance, bends with each step we take, gets jammed with any quick stops or twisting motion and is under added stress when wearing heels.

With anything that takes a beating like the big toe, occasional pain is normal and could stem from a busy, activity-filled day, but constant pain could be the sign of an arthritic condition called hallux rigidus. Hallux refers to the big toe and rigidus means the toe is rigid and cannot move. If it's in an earlier stage and movement is only slightly limited it's called hallux limitus, but as the joint stiffens and worsens over time it can make it difficult for you to walk, stand for long periods of time or crouch down.

Hallux rigidus can be hereditary, but often it is caused by repetitive stress from the workplace or some sports. Workers who are required to stoop a lot, golf and tennis players are more prone to developing hallux rigidus. It can also stem from an injury like a severe stubbed toe.

If you experience any big toe pain while standing for long periods, walking, squatting or bending over, it's time to contact our office for an examination. If caught early, it can be improved over time with conservative treatments such as shoe modifications, physical therapy, orthotics, medication or injection therapy. As the condition worsens if conservative treatment methods fail, surgery may be required. If you notice toe pain, make an appointment with our office to get it properly examined as soon as possible.

## Watch Out for Old Injuries

After spending the long winter months cooped up inside, the first signs of spring always bring excitement and eagerness to get outside. Before heading out for your favorite sports or hitting the pavement, keep in mind the last few months of increased inactivity may have weakened the muscles, tendons and ligaments of your feet and ankles. Stretch and condition your feet and ankles to work your way up to any outdoor activities to avoid injury. If you've experienced a foot or ankle injury in the past, residual pain and weakness could reappear once you start ramping up your activity.

To avoid reinjuring your foot or ankle, schedule an appointment with our office for an athletic or fitness plan to help you ease into the season. We can examine your foot or ankle for damage caused by improperly healing ligaments, which could lead to pain and swelling. Foot and ankle pain is never normal no matter how light or strenuous the activity. Schedule an appointment with our office to make sure your feet and ankles are ready for spring!

