

ASK YOUR PHYSICAL THERAPIST

Why Is My Big Toe Pointing In?

Many people have big toes that point in towards their 2nd toe and often times, this is accompanied by a thickening of the inside of the joint of the big toe. You may have heard this thickening or “extra” bone growth on the inside of the big toe referred to as a bunion. Often times as the big toe starts to drift to the inside, the 2nd toe begins to pull back over time causing the middle of the 2nd toe to lift up and creating what’s called a hammertoe. Hammertoes can be an issue since the toe becomes high in the middle and can rub the inside surface of the shoe. This may cause callousing, a blister and or pain. Typically bunions are painful as well when they first begin to form, however the worse they get, the less painful they sometimes become as they deform.

What Causes Bunions?

This is a good question and there are multiple answers. Bunions can be caused by wearing shoes that are too narrow for your foot type, pointed or tapered shoes such as men and women’s dress shoes are culprits. As you stand during the day, your feet widen and lengthen; this coupled with a shoe that is not wide enough from the get-go causes the big toe to drift inward. Unaddressed foot deformities can cause poor walking mechanics which leads to an excess rotational force which can also drive the big toe inward and the 2nd toe up. For instance, when someone has a flat foot with no arch, often times this causes the foot to roll in excessively, which leads to rotational push off the big toe. This drives the big toe inward causing the bunion and hammertoe over time.

So What Do I Do About My Bunions?

Find a professional who can fit you with a shoe that is correct for your specific foot type and that is wide enough as well as deep enough so the shoe is not pressing against the bunion or hammertoe. A Physical Therapist can manually stretch out the joints and muscles around the big toe and they can resolve the soft tissue tightness and irritation. Additionally, the Physical Therapist can instruct you in stretching and strengthening exercises that support the feet. The Physical Therapists at Cardin and Miller Physical Therapy are EXPERTS in the treatment of foot and ankle care including the treatment of bunions and hammertoes. Cardin and Miller Physical Therapy can also fabricate and fit you with custom foot orthotics, which can help to support your arch and the front of your feet. Custom orthotics can help to prevent bunions and hammertoes, as well keep the bunions and hammertoes you do have in check so they don't worsen.

Surgery is available for this condition, but not advised as it often does not help or helps for a time and then the big toe drifts inward again.

Call Cardin and Miller Physical Therapy today for your FREE SCREEN – 717-245-0400. You can speak one on one with one of our expert Physical Therapists to see how we are able to help.

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