



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
**Foot & Ankle**  
SPECIALISTS

April 2023 Newsletter

## April is National Foot Health Awareness Month!

As birds chirp and flowers bloom, spring brings new beginnings and opportunities to mind. We're committed to helping you keep a "spring" in your step by providing information and resources to ensure your feet are healthy and pain-free. April is National Foot Health Awareness Month, so celebrate by prioritizing the health of your feet so you can continue to put your best foot forward now and throughout the remainder of the year.

### How is Your Foot Health?

You can evaluate your foot health by answering some important questions, such as: Do your feet hurt? Do you have any blisters or abrasions? How about any new abnormal growths? If you could speak to your podiatrist at this moment, would you ask questions or share concerns?

### How Do You Improve Your Foot Health?

Even if your feet feel fine, there are ways to improve your foot health so you can continue to live an active and pain-free lifestyle.

**Get Evaluated Regularly:** When was the last time you visited our office for a foot check-up? A thorough evaluation can go a long way in detecting foot issues that have developed without you noticing. Getting a regular evaluation can also encourage you to take proactive measures toward preventing hereditary foot issues, such as bunions.

**Check Your Feet Daily:** Checking your feet daily will increase the likelihood of discovering a foot issue that should be addressed. If you have diabetes or neuropathy, make a habit of closely examining your feet so you can be aware of any wounds you may not feel and ensure those wounds are healing properly.

**Give Your Feet Some Rest:** If you walk long distances, stand on your feet for prolonged periods, or play sports, give your feet the well-deserved rest they need. In addition to sitting down and resting your feet, consider elevating them, soaking them in warm water, and/or scheduling a foot massage.

**Only Wear Properly Fitting and Supportive Footwear:** Your footwear choices can help—or hurt—your feet. Choose shoes that fit well and offer adequate support/cushioning. If you need footwear recommendations, consult your podiatrist.

**Get Some Custom Orthotics:** If you're experiencing foot pain, your podiatrist may prescribe custom orthotics. These prescription shoe inserts provide extra cushioning, redistribute pressure, and correct alignment issues.

# HAMMERTOES DON'T REALLY INVOLVE A HAMMER

Have you ever heard of hammertoes? Many people have but don't know what they are. Identifying problems with your feet is the key to maintaining your foot health throughout your life. So, let's take a look at hammertoes.

## What are Hammertoes?

Hammertoes are deformities of the toe where the middle joint bends, resembling the hammer. This can happen if the toe remains in a bent position for too long because of a muscle imbalance. It can also be caused by shoes that are too tight, wearing high heels, and even arthritis. Any toe can develop hammertoes, but the second, third, and fourth toes are most commonly affected. If you have toe pain and notice that your toes are bending in an unnatural position, you may suffer from hammertoes.

## Do Hammertoes Need to be Treated?

A painful hammertoe should be treated, but if you're not experiencing any discomfort, it is ultimately your choice to seek treatment. However, it is important to note that the condition will not resolve itself. Therefore, seeking professional advice in our office is always a good idea.

## How Are Hammertoes Treated?

There are a few non-surgical treatments that can help improve hammertoes. These include:

**Hammertoe Pads:** These pads are designed to cushion the affected toe and relieve pressure on the toe joint. They can also help to realign the toe and prevent further deformity. In many cases, pads can be used to successfully treat hammertoes without the need for surgery.

**Good Footwear:** Wearing shoes with more room in the toe area will help reduce the pressure on your toes and prevent the condition from worsening. Our team can advise you on the best footwear options.

**Custom Orthotics:** Another great way to treat hammertoes is to use custom orthotics. Orthotics are shoe inserts that help to support your feet and realign your bones and joints.

## Exercise

Exercises that improve the condition of your muscles and tendons can also be helpful in treating hammertoes. Some easy exercises to start with are: using your toes to pick up marbles or crumpling a towel with your toes.

## Surgery

We only advise surgery as a last resort in cases where the hammertoe is causing significant discomfort. It may seem drastic, but surgery is often quick and easy. It is a simple procedure that will help to correct the underlying deformity and relieve pain. When all other treatment options have failed, surgery for hammertoes can offer a much-needed sense of relief.

## Clubfoot Spotlight

At Southern California Foot & Ankle Specialists, we strive to be the best in clubfoot treatments and care. This condition can be so heartbreaking at a time that is supposed to be filled with the joy of childbirth. However, there is so much hope because clubfoot is treatable.

Our website is a great resource of information on all things relating to clubfoot. If your family or someone you know is dealing with a child with clubfoot, our office is ready to help. Reach out to us by calling (949) 364-9255 (WALK), or by filling out our contact form online.

We also know of great resources that will help with the journey of the clubfoot treatment, including support groups online. You do not have to go through this alone, but let us help you gather support around you and your family starting today!