

Know the facts on

Hallux Rigidus

What is Hallux Rigidus?

Hallux rigidus is a disorder of the joint located at the base of the big toe. It causes pain and stiffness in the joint, and with time it gets increasingly harder to bend the toe.

Hallux rigidus is actually a form of degenerative arthritis. This disorder can be very troubling and even disabling, since we use the big toe whenever we walk, stoop down, climb up, or even stand.



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What causes Hallux Rigidus?

Hallux Rigidus can be a result of inheriting a genetic foot type prone to developing this and similar conditions. It can also be associated with overuse, especially for people with activities or jobs that increase the stress on the big toe, for example workers who might have to stoop or squat often. Hallux Rigidus can also result from injury or from inflammatory diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis or gout.

What will happen if I leave it untreated?

If Hallux Rigidus is not treated it can result in increased pain and stiffness, which can also lead to decreased mobility. Patients may also experience pain in the ball or the outside of the foot. This is due to them walking on the outside of their foot to avoid pressure on the big toe.



What can help?

You may wish to consider modifications to your shoes. A shoe with a larger toe box would reduce the pressure on your toe. Shoes with a pointed toe or a high heel should be avoided due to the pressure that they create on the toe.

What are the treatment options?

In many cases seeking early treatment can prevent the future requirement of surgery.

Typical treatment options would include custom-made orthotics, helping to improve foot function, and medications such as ibuprofen to reduce the pain and inflammation.

Surgery would be considered as a last resort if conservative treatments had not provided any symptom relief.