



What's Hurting **YOUR** Foot?

A User's Guide to
Foot and Ankle Health

Shine John, DPM

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Why I Wrote This Book

Well, to begin with, I'm a podiatrist. What that means I'll cover in detail later in this book, but for now, it's enough to know that I am a specialist in the care and treatment of feet and ankles. My name is Dr. Shine John, DPM and I am a partner of Austin Foot and Ankle Specialists.

I'm also an active member of my community. Because of my unique training in the care of feet and ankles, I see people every day who suffer from foot pain. So often my patients tell me that they've been experiencing symptoms, including pain, for very long periods of time before they finally come in to see me. In some cases they've waited years! Sometimes when I'm out in the community, at the grocery store, for example, I'll see folks I know who say, "Hi Doc. You know I need to come in to see you because I've got a pain in my ankle or my heel hurts." Then months will go by and I'll see them again and they'll repeat the same thing.

When they finally do come in, in almost every case I am able to alleviate their pain, treat their condition, and drastically improve their quality of life. Often their pain is relieved before they even leave the office!

The big question I used to ask myself is "Why?" Why do people suffer needlessly for years when a quick trip to see me almost always relieves their problems? It used to bother me, but as I've continued to see patients I've come to understand that sometimes fear of the unknown is stronger than the pain or inconveniences my patients face.

What I've also learned is that in case after case – even though my patients could have saved themselves time, trouble, and expense by just coming in to see me – patients didn't have enough information to help them clearly understand their foot pain and the incredible options that state-of-the art podiatric medicine offers today.

What's Hurting YOUR Foot?

So, I created this publication. I wrote it for you. I also wrote it to help you clearly understand what is happening with your feet and to help you get a sense of the help that is awaiting you at a podiatrist's office. I hope it is helpful and that it answers your questions. If after reading it you think you might be helped by seeing a podiatrist, I hope you consider Austin Foot and Ankle Specialists. My staff and I will do everything we can to treat your condition, reduce or eliminate your pain, and make you feel at home.

Dedicated to your health,

Shine John, DPM

What Causes Foot Pain?

The most common foot problems are:

Achilles Tendonitis The Achilles tendon is named for Achilles, the Greek mythology hero, who was vulnerable only at his heel. The Achilles tendon is the largest tendon (a band of tissue that connects muscle to bone) in the human body and is very strong, but is also the tendon we most often rupture. Everyone who is active can suffer from Achilles Tendonitis, a common overuse injury and inflammation of the tendon. Symptoms of Achilles tendonitis include mild pain after exercise or running that gradually worsens, a noticeable sense of sluggishness in your leg, and episodes of diffuse or localized pain, sometimes severe, along the tendon during or a few hours after activity. Symptoms also include tenderness, or sometimes intense pain, when the sides of the tendon are squeezed. Other symptoms can be swelling, morning tenderness in the Achilles tendon, or stiffness that generally diminishes as the tendon warms up with use.

Athlete's Foot or Dermatitis is an infection that is caused by various types of fungus. It is passed in public areas where people typically are in their bare feet such as water parks, pools, and hotel showers. Athlete's foot can be as mild as itching and scaling to as severe as quite painful inflammation and blisters. Like all fungus it thrives in dark, moist areas like the spaces between your toes and then spread to other areas of your feet. In some cases, over-the-counter creams or powders can treat the fungus.

Bunions are caused by your big toe joints becoming incorrectly aligned. This causes the first joint on your big toe to slant outward and the second joint then angles toward your other toes. Your joints then begin to swell. It causes a bump of bone on the foot that can become very painful if left untreated.



Chronic Wounds are open sores known as ulcers that can become seriously infected, gangrenous, and in some cases necessitate amputation. This is often

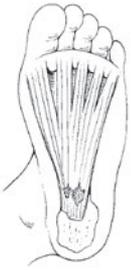
due to limited blood flow or increased pressure on the skin, which can slow the body's own, healing process. Many patients seek professional help for wounds that have not healed after months of standard wound treatment. In the majority of patients, treatment programs produce complete healing, usually within a few months.

Corns and **Calluses** are open sores known as ulcers that can become seriously infected, gangrenous, and in some cases necessitate amputation. This is often due to limited blood flow or increased pressure on the skin, which can slow the body's own, healing process. Many patients seek professional help for wounds that have not healed after months of standard wound treatment. In the majority of patients, treatment programs produce complete healing, usually within a few months.

Diabetic Neuropathy is characterized by numbness and lack of feeling in the feet as well as burning and tingling pain that can later develop. It is a complication of diabetes that affects the nerves that causes this condition. Since diabetic neuropathy can cause a person to lose his or her ability to feel pain, it is possible for a patient to develop minor cuts and sores without realizing it. If left untreated these minor wounds can develop into ulcers and sometimes even lead to amputation. Other results of diabetic neuropathy can be bunions, hammertoe, and Charcot Foot. There are new and exciting treatments for Diabetic Neuropathy that you'll be able to explore with your podiatrist.

Fungal Nails are caused by an infection that occurs underneath the surface of your nails. Sometimes the infection can penetrate inside your nails. In both cases they can be quite painful and impede your ability to walk or run. The fungus can cause the nail to become discolored, misshapen, and malodorous. Sometimes I can prescribe oral or topical medication and remove the diseased nail portions through a process known as debridement. In other cases we can surgically remove the infected nail and eliminate the fungus completely. This can allow a new healthy nail to grow.

Gout is a form of arthritis that is caused by an inflammation in your joints due to an accumulation of urate crystals in your body. This happens when your body produces too much uric acid, which is a by-product of breaking down the protein you eat. Symptoms include severe and sudden attacks of pain, redness, and tenderness in joints.



Hammertoe occur when the muscles in your feet become unbalanced and your toe develops a sideways bend in your middle toe joint. Hammertoes are often associated with bunions that can contribute to the development of hammer-toes. Pain can result from the undue pressure hammertoes can create in shoe fit.

Heel spurs can be found in people with plantar fasciitis, but they are rarely the source of pain. Heel spurs are bony growths on the underside of the heel bone caused by tension from a tight plantar fascia ligament. They result from strain on the muscles and ligaments of the foot, stretching of the plantar fascia, and repeated tearing away of the lining or membrane that covers the heel bone. Close to 70% of patients with plantar fasciitis have a heel spur that can be seen on an x-ray. Plantar fasciitis and heel spurs are often confused and they are related, but they are not the same condition.

Hyperhidrosis or excessive sweating is caused by over-active sweat glands on the bottom of the foot. Also known as trench foot, if left untreated it can lead to thickened, macerated, and painful skin on the soles of the feet. An unpleasant side effect of this condition is foot odor.

Ingrown toenails are caused by a portion of your nail pressing into the flesh of your toe resulting in pain. There are many causes for ingrown toenails such as lack of or improper nail trimming, poorly fitting shoes, injuries, infections, or fungus. Proper shoe selection and careful attention to regular nail trimming can help prevent this painful condition.

Neuromas occur most commonly between the third and fourth toes. They are caused by a pinching of the nerves between the metatarsals, which results in inflammation. As the irritation continues, the nerve gets larger and causes sharp pain, cramping, and burning. Shoes that are too tight will aggravate the condition.

Plantar Fasciitis is the most common cause of heel pain on the bottom of the foot and is an inflammation in the band of tissue (the plantar fascia) that runs from the heel to the toes. This condition is most often caused by poor foot structure such as overly flat feet or high arches. It can also be caused by wearing non-supportive footwear on hard surfaces, spending long hours on your feet, or obesity. The pain from plantar fasciitis is usually a sharp,

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stabbing pain on the inside of the bottom of the heel that can feel like a knife sticking into your heel. Pain from plantar fasciitis is usually most severe when you first stand on your feet in the morning. It will usually subside, but can return with prolonged standing or walking or getting up after long periods of sitting.

Sports Injuries are being seen with increasing frequency as Americans continue to make regular exercise part of their overall fitness plan. Sports injuries to the foot and ankle can be caused by trauma, improper warm-up, overuse, improper footwear, and playing on hard surfaces. Podiatrists who treat sports injuries have a working knowledge of individual sports and the commonly associated injuries. They also have a thorough understanding of the best treatments for these injuries.

Tarsal Tunnel Syndrome describes compression of a major nerve into the foot, similar to that of Carpal tunnel syndrome in the wrist. Both disorders arise from the compression of a nerve in a confined space. The tarsal tunnel is a tight space in the foot that lies between bones and tough fibrous tissue. A nerve called the posterior tibial nerve lies within the tarsal tunnel. If this nerve becomes compressed or squeezed, tarsal tunnel syndrome can result. Symptoms include numbness over the bottom of the foot and/or pain, burning and tingling over the base of the foot and heel.

What Can a Podiatrist Do About Foot Pain?

Let's start at the beginning and answer the question, **“What is a Podiatrist?”**

A podiatrist is a specialist who focuses on your feet and ankles. We are quite simply “The Experts” on your feet and ankles and should be the very first doctor you call when you experience pain or other problems with them.

The DPM after our name stands for Doctor of Podiatric Medicine. Most people know that podiatrists deal with foot and ankle problems and work with seniors, or diabetics, or people with poor circulation; but what most people don't know is that podiatrists treat patients of all ages. A podiatrist is also well-qualified to help children and young adults with the problems that they can experience with their feet and ankles.

Podiatrists are required, just like any other doctor, to be licensed by the state in which they practice. When medically necessary, podiatrists can perform surgery to correct or remedy problems. Before I recommend surgery, I will explore the many conservative therapies and remedies that are available for our patients and then recommend the very best course of treatment. As medical science advances and new therapies become available to the public, podiatrists are increasingly able to offer their patients some of the most state-of-the-art care available. I'm constantly amazed at the new therapies I can offer my patients and will discuss several of them now.

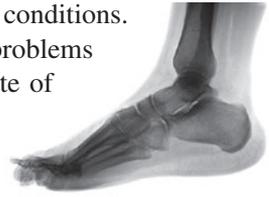
Conservative Foot Care

Also known as non-surgical treatment, conservative foot care is being used to treat many foot problems with dramatic results. Any initial visit to a podiatrist's office will start with a patient history and physical examination. Diagnostic X-rays and laboratory tests can also be used to help determine the best course of treatment.

Non-surgical treatments may be called for in many cases including medical conditions, which preclude the option of elective surgery, time commitment

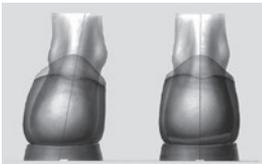
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constraints, and elderly patients with many medical conditions. Patients with arthritis, diabetes, and circulatory foot problems may all be helped by non-surgical treatments. In spite of not being able to opt for foot surgery many patients find great relief from pain and discomfort through the use of conservative foot care treatments.



There are a wide variety of non-surgical treatments being used by podiatrists today. Injections, oral and topical medications, and foot, ankle, or toe strappings are all examples of conservative foot care. Other options are exercise, custom-made walking shoes, and orthotics. Additional treatments prescribed by podiatrists include physical therapy, foot massage, trimming of corns and calluses, and proper nail trimming and foot care.

Orthotics



Custom-made foot supports that are worn under your heel and the arch of your foot are referred to as orthotics. These devices are molded to be anatomically matched to your foot and they do more than just provide support. Orthotics are designed to realign your foot to a neutral or natural position to alleviate pain in your feet, legs and back, as well as to restore balance, improve sports performance, and relieve foot fatigue.

Research shows that the majority of foot problems can be directly connected to skeletal imbalance. More people tend to have some amount of either hyperpronation (flat feet) or hypersupination (high arches). The presence of these conditions can cause the foot to be unstable during normal everyday activity. This constant stress on the feet can lead to pain in the feet, ankles, legs, knees, hips, and back. Orthotics can improve function in the foot by compensating for existing imbalances and in most cases can relieve or prevent the associated pains.

How do you know if the use of orthotics is right for you? If you have an obvious imbalance that causes such symptoms as flat feet or high arches, or if you have external misalignments such as “knock knees”, “bow legs”, in-toeing, or out-toeing you are probably a good candidate for orthotics. If you participate in an activity that places stress on your feet or if your work requires you to be on your feet for extended periods orthotics could be beneficial. The use of orthotics is just one of the conservative foot treatments used in our offices. They

can be used to treat foot, heel, and arch pain, some calluses, diabetic ulcers and pressure sores, arthritis, abnormal foot function, and to prevent sports injuries or improve sports function. They also can slow the progression of foot deformities, such as bunions and hammertoes, to delay or prevent surgery. Orthotics can be used to treat children as well as adults. The best way to find out if orthotics can help you is to make an appointment with us for an exam.

Foot and Ankle Surgery

In some cases foot and ankle problems do not respond to conservative treatments. A podiatrist can best determine when foot surgery might be beneficial. In cases when pain or deformity persists surgery may be needed to restore full foot function.

Prior to surgery a podiatric surgeon will review your medical history and perform an examination. Specific medical tests may be required before undergoing foot and ankle surgery. These tests may include X-rays, blood tests, urinalysis, and blood flow studies to determine the circulatory status of your feet and legs.

The type of surgery performed determines the length and method of postoperative care that is needed. All postoperative care includes some degree of rest, ice, compression, and elevation. Other elements can include bandages, splints, surgical shoes, casts, crutches, and canes. Recovery can be quickened by carefully following your podiatrist's instructions.

Shock Wave Therapy and ESWT

Extracorporeal Shock Wave Therapy treatments use high-power sound waves to end chronic heel pain without surgery. Extracorporeal Shock Wave Therapy (ESWT) is a noninvasive surgical procedure that uses sound waves to stimulate healing in some physical disorders, including plantar fasciitis. "Extracorporeal" means "outside of the body" and refers to the way the therapy is applied.

This treatment is being offered by our office as an alternative to invasive heel surgery. The discovery of ESWT came about somewhat by accident. Shock wave therapy is used regularly by urologists to break up and disperse kidney stones. Urologists began reporting that patients who had kidney stones treated showed increased bone density and new tissue growth. This led to studies for using shock wave therapy for soft tissue injuries and the results were amazing—75%-80% of patients with soft tissue injuries were reported to be healed or greatly improved following ESWT.

ESWT has been used extensively for several years to treat plantar fasciitis and other disorders. Shock wave therapy works by purposely targeting trauma at the pain site. This stimulates the diseased tissue and activates your body's own healing process. Blood and oxygen rush to the site, activating a metabolic response that fosters healing by the growth of new connective tissue. This is what is damaged and torn when you have plantar fasciitis or heel spur pain.

The most important and exciting aspects of ESWT are that it ends the pain, the procedure is minimally painful, there isn't a lengthy recovery period, and there are no side effects. Because there is no incision, ESWT offers two main advantages over traditional surgical methods: fewer potential complications and a faster return to normal activity.

Prolotherapy with Autologous Platelet-Rich Plasma

Injectable autologous blood products is a new, safe and very effective biosurgical method which has created a growing interest for use in a number of foot and ankle therapies. The healing effects of plasma are supported by growth factors released by platelets. These growth factors induce a healing process wherever they are applied. When activated they release growth and anti-inflammatory factor proteins. In locomotive organ tissues (cartilage, tendons, ligaments, bones and skin) they support healing, regenerative and repair processes.

Essential function of platelets is evident every time when the tissue integrity of the human body is broken. After every scratch, cut etc. a set of complicated reactions of our organisms is launched in order to stop bleeding and restoration of structures within the injury. And growth and anti-inflammatory factors released from activated platelets considerably enhance the whole healing process.

Concentrating these factors into tissues causes:

- Anti-inflammatory processes
- Acceleration of the healing process
- Prevention of disease transfer into a chronic condition
- Regeneration and reparation of damaged tissue structures

Conditions for the use of Autologous Conditioned Plasma:

- Plantar Fasciitis/Fasciosis
- Achilles Tendonitis/Tendonosis
- Acute and Chronic Ankle Strain/Sprains

How Does a Podiatrist Treat Common Ailments?

Now that we know what a podiatrist is and some of the treatments available let's take a look at some specific foot problems and the treatments I can offer to reduce or eliminate your pain. It is impossible to discuss all the potential problems that can affect your foot health in a book of this size, but what I wanted to tell you about the problems I see most often at our offices.

Achilles Tendonitis

Treatment depends on the degree of injury to the tendon, but normally includes rest, which may mean a total withdrawal from running or exercise for a week, or simply switching to another exercise, such as swimming, that does not stress the Achilles tendon. Treatment can also include nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medication (NSAIDs), orthoses, which are devices to help support the muscle and relieve stress on the tendon such as a heel pad or shoe insert, a bandage specifically designed to restrict motion of the tendon, and stretching, massage, ultrasound and appropriate exercises to strengthen the weak muscle group in front of the leg and the upward foot flexors.

Arch Pain

Plantar fasciitis is an inflammation of a thick, fibrous ligament in the arch of the foot called the plantar fascia. The plantar fascia attaches into the heel bone and fans out toward the ball of the foot, attaching into the base of the toes. If this ligament is stretched excessively it will become inflamed and begin to cause pain.



Steroid injections, used in the treatment of heel pain, are not commonly used for the treatment of plantar fasciitis in the arch. The main emphasis of treatment is to reduce the forces that are causing the plantar fascia to stretch excessively. This includes calf muscle stretching, well-constructed pre-made arch supports and custom made orthotics. Oral anti-inflammatory medications may be useful in controlling the pain.

Arthritis

Over 30 million American adults report being told by a doctor that they have some type of arthritis. It is a major cause of lost work time and serious disability for many people. Although arthritis is mainly a disease of adults, children may also have it. When a patient has arthritis, it means that the cartilage and even the lining of their joints have become swollen and inflamed.

There are numerous types of arthritis. The reason that your feet seem to be more susceptible to arthritis than other parts of your body is that your feet have so many joints that can be affected. The odds are just stacked against your feet. In addition, your feet and ankles bear the full weight of your entire body every single day.

While there are dozens of types of arthritis, we want to point out two of the most common.

Osteoarthritis The most common type of arthritis is osteoarthritis. It is seen in many people as they age, although it may begin when they are younger as a result of injury or overuse. It is often more painful in weight bearing joints such as the knee, hip, and spine than in the wrist, elbow, and shoulder joints. All joints may be affected if they are used extensively in work or sports, or if they have been damaged from fractures or other injuries.

The key to treating arthritis in your feet is early detection and proper care from a podiatrist. Be vigilant in checking your feet every day and if you begin to experience stiffness (especially in the morning when you wake up and start walking), swelling, or redness just give us a call and let us check it out for you.

In osteoarthritis, the cartilage covering the ends of the bones gradually wears away. In many cases, bone growths called “spurs” can develop in osteoarthritis joints. The joint inflammation causes pain and swelling. Continued use of the joint produces pain. Some relief may be possible through rest or modified activity.

Rheumatoid Arthritis is a long-lasting disease that can affect many parts of the body, including the joints. Rheumatoid arthritis can affect people of all ages, even children. However, more than 70 percent of people with this disease are over 30 years old. Many joints of the body may be involved at the same time. Rheumatoid arthritis cannot be cured but it can be treated. The goals of treatment are to provide pain relief, increase motion, and improve strength.

Bunions

Bunions are caused by your big toe joints becoming incorrectly aligned. This causes the first joint on your big toe to slant outward and the second joint then angles toward your other toes. Your joints then begin to swell. It causes a bump of bone on the foot that can become very painful if left untreated.

Bunions can be hereditary, but also can be aggravated by shoes that aren't a good fit. Surgery is often recommended to correct the problem. Most bunions can be treated without surgery by wearing protective pads to cushion the painful area, and of course, avoiding ill-fitting shoes in the first place.

Diabetes

Diabetes can affect many parts of the body, especially the feet. According to the American Diabetes Association, about 15.7 million Americans (5.9 percent of the United States population) have diabetes. It is very important that a diabetic gives the feet very special care. A small problem in a healthy person could become a severe one to a diabetic.

Diabetes can affect the feet in a number of different ways. The first is infection, which is one of the most common complications of the diabetic foot. Because diabetes causes reduced immune response, a diabetic patient's ability to fight infection is decreased. Early treatment of infection is a critical component to success. If neglected, infection of the foot can cause gangrene, ulceration, bone infection, and even amputation.

Another complication of diabetes called neuropathy causes decreased sensation to pain and temperature. This may cause a patient to underestimate a foot problem. It may also be responsible for an absence of perspiration leading to dry, cracking skin that can more easily become infected.

Foot ulcers are local skin defects with inflammation or infection. They can be caused by lack of circulation, infection, lack of protection, and improperly fitting shoes. A break in the skin without proper treatment may become an ulcer. Diabetics are at higher risk for developing foot ulcers.

With a diabetic foot, a wound as small as a blister from wearing a shoe that's too tight can cause a lot of damage. Diabetes decreases blood flow, so injuries are slow to heal. When your wound is not healing, it's at risk for infection. As a diabetic, your infections spread quickly. If you have diabetes, you should

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inspect your feet every day. Look for puncture wounds, bruises, pressure areas, redness, warmth, blisters, ulcers, scratches, cuts and nail problems. Get someone to help you, or use a mirror. Diabetic foot care can be very complicated and good podiatric care is an essential component of managing diabetes.

Here is some basic advice for the care of diabetic feet:

- Inspect your feet every day.
- Keep your feet clean and dry.
- Always keep your feet warm.
- Take extra care drying your feet and toes after showering. Pay special attention to the space between your toes.
- Be sure to exercise. Walking is one of the best exercises for diabetics unless you have complications. If you struggle with balance use a cane.
- Always protect your feet and legs. Never walk barefoot.
- Avoid hot water bottles and heating pads.
- Do not overexpose skin to the sun.
- If your skin is dry use moisturizing cream or lotion daily. Do not, however, apply between the toes.
- Cut your toenails straight across and even with the skin on the end of your toes. Do not cut into the corners. If you can't see or reach your toenails have someone else do it for you.
- Never use razor blades, knives, scissors or medicated corn/wart removers.
- Look for redness, blisters, scratches, cracks between the toes, discoloration or any other change.
- Avoid all actions that diminish circulation such as tobacco use, sitting with legs crossed, and circular elastic garters.
- Change your shoes and socks daily.
- Wear soft leather shoes that conform to the shape of your foot.
- Gradually "break in" new shoes and avoid blisters.
- Call us if you see any changes in your feet.

When your feet lose their feeling, they are at risk for becoming deformed. When this happens, your feet are more prone to developing ulcers. Open sores may become infected. Another way the foot becomes deformed is through the bone condition Charcot (pronounced "sharko") Foot. This is one of the most serious foot problems a diabetic can face. It warps the shape of the foot when bones fracture and disintegrate, and yet one continues to walk on it because it doesn't hurt. Diabetic foot ulcers and early phases of Charcot fractures can be treated simply with non-surgical measures.

Fungal Nails

Fungal infections of the nail bed, matrix, or nail plate are responsible for about 50% of all cases of thick, discolored toenails. There are four different types of fungal nail infections classified by the part of the nail involved. Fungal nails can be caused by tight footwear, minor trauma caused by exercise, communal showers, and diseases that influence the immune system.

Treatment for fungal nails varies by the nature of the infection and the severity. A podiatrist can detect a fungal infection early and formulate a suitable treatment plan. This can include topical or oral medication, debridement (thinning down of the nails), Laser treatment and in extreme cases, surgery. Trying to solve any nail infection without the help of a podiatrist can lead to more problems.

Haglund's Deformity

Another name for Haglund's Deformity is retrocalcaneal bursitis. The heel bone enlarges in the back area where the Achilles tendon attaches to the bone. This sometimes painful deformity generally is the result of bursitis caused by pressure against the shoe, and can be aggravated by the height or stitching of a heel counter of a particular shoe. Sometimes something as simple as changing your shoes can alleviate the symptoms.

Hammertoe

Hammertoe is a flexible or rigid contraction usually affecting the second, third, fourth, or fifth toe. In this condition, the toe is bent at the middle joint, resembling a hammer.



Muscle imbalance leads to a bending or “buckling” of the toe joints. These buckled or contracted positions create any number of problems within and on top of the toe deformity. It is important to treat hammertoes early. As they advance and lose flexibility the only option for correction may be surgery. Hammertoes can cause complications such as corns or calluses at the point where they come into contact with the shoes. As with many foot problems one of the causes of hammertoes can be improperly fitted shoes.

Podiatrists have a variety of ways to treat hammertoes, including surgery, better shoes designed with extra room for toes, corn pads, straps, and cushions.

Metatarsalgia (Pain in the Ball of the Foot)

Metatarsalgia is foot pain in the ball of your foot, which is the area between

your arch and your toes. It gets its name because the pain experienced is located in the metatarsals located in this part of the foot.

In this condition one or more of the metatarsal joints becomes inflamed and possibly painful. People often develop a callus under the affected joint. There are many causes of metatarsalgia including injuries, arthritis, poorly fitting shoes, and working on very hard surfaces. Sometimes changing your shoes will fix the problem. I may also recommend orthotics or offloading pads.

Stress Fractures

An incomplete break in the bone caused by overuse is known as a stress fracture. Symptoms can include pain, swelling, and redness. Up to 15% of all sports injuries are stress fractures. A podiatrist needs to perform an examination and look at X-rays of the injury in order to diagnose a stress fracture. Treatments include immobilization of the foot with the use of a cast, medications, and in some cases orthotic devices to prevent further injury.

Sprains

An ankle sprain occurs by stretching or tearing one or more ligaments on either or both sides of the ankle. Ignoring a sprain won't help it heal any faster. Ankle injuries that are serious enough to cause disabling pain should be treated by a podiatrist. Further examination may even reveal a torn ligament or bone fracture. Common treatments for sprains include rest, elevation, compression, and ice. More serious sprains may call for a walking cast boot, ankle bracing, crutches or other walking devices.

Warts

Warts are caused by a virus that generally enters the body through small nicks or abrasions in the skin. When they occur on the soles of the feet they are known as plantar warts. Due to the amount of pressure that is put on the feet in the course of a day, plantar warts can become quite painful. Warts most commonly infect teenagers between the ages of 12–16 but they can occur at any age. Warts are often contracted by walking barefoot on dirty surfaces or ground. The virus thrives in warm, moist environments like showers and swimming pools.

If you suspect that you or a family member has a plantar wart, see a podiatrist to get a correct diagnosis and treatment plan. Treatments may include the use of a wart-removal preparation or pulse-dye laser treatment to safely remove the wart.

Wounds and Ulcers

Foot ulcerations or open wounds are a condition where there is a breakdown in many layers of skin and tissue sometimes going all the way to the bone. They can be caused by pressure to a weight bearing point on the foot, but they can also occur on top of the foot or between toes due to pressure from shoes or a bony spur. The risk of ulcer formation is higher in patients with decreased circulation or impaired blood supply to the legs and feet. Diabetics are prone to foot ulcerations, but they can be found in patients with high blood pressure, blood clots, varicose veins, and phlebitis as well.

Treatment for foot ulcerations varies according to the cause of the wound. The goal of the treatment is to close the wound from the inside out as quickly as possible. In cases where there is adequate circulation, debridement (removal of dead tissue) may be used around the edges and within the ulcer itself to promote healing. Other treatments include oral medications, compression, and bed rest. New advances have been made in wound care in recent years including the use of a platelet-derived growth factor as a way to promote healing. Podiatrists are trained to diagnose and treat all forms of foot and leg ulcerations.

What Can You Do About Foot Pain?

The first step in dealing with foot pain is to care for your feet. Your feet are the hardest working part of your body. They carry you wherever you need to go, whenever you need to go there and they do it for years and years. In fact, during your lifetime you will have traveled on your feet the equivalent of three trips around the entire world. You take, on average, 15,000 steps a day and will walk or run well over 75,000 miles in your lifetime. Caring for your precious feet and ankles is the best step to avoid foot pain and is a critical component in eliminating it as well.

Here are some steps you can take to keep your feet healthy and functioning:

First and foremost – do not ignore pain in your feet and ankles. Healthy feet don't have persistent pain or skin that looks unusual. If your pain doesn't subside quickly, please contact our office right away. The sooner I can see you and examine your feet, the quicker I can begin to make the corrections needed to get your feet healthy again. So often I see people who have waited a very long time and suffered needlessly –sometimes for years.

Try to develop a habit of always checking your feet. A great time to do this is right after a shower or during a bath. If you start a habit of carefully drying your feet after bathing (pay special attention to the skin between your toes) you can quickly check your feet to see if you notice any changes. If you see nails that look unusual you might be seeing a potential fungus developing. If your skin is broken, cracked or an unusual color, or you are noticing abnormalities. Finally, if your foot is changing shape or you observe new growth you should make an appointment to see us so I can treat these conditions before they progress and become worse.

If you have diabetes it is especially important to check your feet very regularly and often. In fact, I recommend that you have someone else help you check your feet, because you may not be able to see or, most importantly,

feel problems. Early detection and treatment may avoid potentially serious complications later.

See a podiatrist if you have a problem with your feet. Treating yourself can often cause problems or exacerbate existing problems. If you are diabetic you are at greater risk for foot problems so be sure to make an appointment to see us at least once a year. I'd love to see you. I am here to help!



When To Call a Podiatrist

Podiatrists are the experts on feet and ankles and should be the first doctor you call when you experience any of the symptoms or pains described in this book.

Podiatrists treat foot and ankle problems for patients of all ages. You should call a podiatrist when you have pain in your feet and ankles. If you notice that there is any change at all to your nails or the skin on your feet and ankles, you should see the “expert” on your feet.

If you have diabetes or poor circulation and you develop any abnormal symptoms you should see us immediately. You are at much greater risk for serious complications. And if you have diabetes you should see us at least once a year whether or not you have symptoms or pain. Regular checkups are a great way to help keep your feet and ankles healthy.

Most importantly, you should call us first when you have pain or any issue that affects your feet and ankles.

What To Do If You Are In Severe Pain

Pain is our body's way of telling us that something is wrong. And it usually is true that the more severe the pain, the more serious the problem. If you are experiencing severe foot pain, seek treatment from a podiatrist immediately. Podiatrists specialize in dealing with foot and ankle problems and are experts in helping treat your symptoms. You can reach our offices at:

Austin Foot and Ankle Specialists
5000 Bee Cave Rd. Suite 202
Austin, TX 78747

If you are experiencing an emergency, call 911.

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Final Thoughts

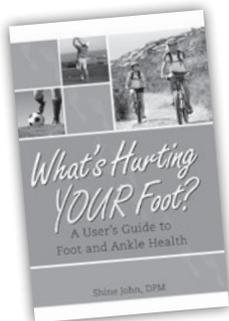
I hope the information in this publication has been helpful. My purpose for sharing it with you is to give you the information you need to take the appropriate actions to care for your feet and ankles. I hope it helps you understand the pain you or your loved one may be experiencing. I also wrote it to help you see that podiatric medicine has benefited greatly from the advances medical science is making in the treatment of foot and ankle conditions.

I know that making an appointment to see a doctor isn't always the easiest thing to do, but with knowledge and understanding you can see that we podiatrists can offer you many treatments that can greatly improve the quality of your life.

Dedicated to Your Health,

Shine John, DPM

Free Copy of What's Hurting YOUR Foot?



If you have any friends or family members who might benefit from the information provided in this book, I would be happy to provide them with their own copy free of charge. Just tell them to call us at 512-328-8900 or visit our website at www.AustinFootandAnkle.com to request it online OR return this form. **Pass on the knowledge...Knowledge is power!**

There is no need to destroy this book. Just photocopy this form, give it to your friend and tell them to mail it or fax it to us. Fax 512-328-8903 or mail to: 5000 Bee Cave Rd. Suite 202, Austin, TX 78747

I want a Free Copy of *What's Hurting YOUR Foot?*

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

About the Doctor



Dr. Shine John is a partner of Austin Foot and Ankle Specialists, in Austin Texas. This specialty foot and ankle practice offers the latest medical and surgical advancements to patients of all ages. Dr. John is a podiatric physician, surgeon, and specialist.

At Austin Foot and Ankle Specialists our mission is to offer the highest quality medical and surgical podiatric care to patients of all ages. Patients will be empowered to be active participants in their health care by understanding their specific foot and ankle conditions. Through this understanding patients will be able to make informed decisions that will positively affect their treatment outcomes. To meet this goal, we offer our patients: a friendly, warm and inviting office, a positive and caring staff, accurate diagnosis with review of your treatment options, advanced therapeutic methods and effective quality care.

Our clinic continues to pursue advances in the medical and surgical care of the foot and ankle and will continue educating patients as well as others in the community regarding the appropriate care of foot and ankle problems.



Shine John, DPM

5000 Bee Cave Rd. Suite 202, Austin, TX 78747

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www.AustinFootandAnkle.com