



Fore Foot Pain

Podiatry Service

Fore foot pain, also known as metatarsalgia, is pain that develops over the ball of your foot and toe joints.

This broad term encompasses a wide range of foot problems that can have different presentations and treatments. It can last from a few days to many months.

Common conditions include:

Callus and corns: Hard skin over prominent areas on the ball of your foot (See callus and corns leaflet)

Hallus limitus/rigidus: Limited movement in the joint at the base of your big toe. This can alter how you walk increasing pressure over the ball of the foot.

Morton's Neuroma: A swelling of the nerve often between the 2nd and 3rd toes. This can cause a sharp pain when walking and numb sensation in toes.

Low or high arches: can change the way you walk and can be caused by or lead to osteoarthritis in the foot.

Trauma/injury/surgery/fractures/congenital or medical conditions such as diabetes or rheumatoid arthritis can cause forefoot pain.

Tight leg muscles or reduced ankle movement: This can put increased pressure over the ball of your foot as you walk

Most foot problems will settle in time however if you have pain in the ball of your foot you should:

- Rest and raise your foot when you can.
- Put an ice pack in a towel on the painful area for up to 20 minutes every 2-3 hours.

- Wear wide comfortable shoes with a low heel and cushioning insoles such as trainers. Flat shoes can increase pressure on the ball of the foot.
- Avoid high heels and tight pointy shoes.
- Off the shelf insoles can help support and cushion your feet.
- If you are over weight try to lose weight.
- Try Regular gentle stretching (see CSP website on back page, or consider a self referral to physiotherapy).
- Take paracetamol.
- Remove any hard skin, corns and callus.

Pharmacists can advise on painkillers and treatment of common skin conditions.

When to See a Podiatrist or your GP:

- The pain is severe and stopping you doing your normal activities.
- the pain is getting worse or keeps coming back.
- The pain has not improved after treating at home for 3-4 weeks.
- You have tingling or loss of sensation in your foot.
- You have diabetes – foot problems can be more serious if you have diabetes
- You are unable to manage your own foot care such as corns and callus.

<https://cop.org.uk/foot-health/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/foot-pain/pain-in-the-ball-of-the-foot/>

<https://www.csp.org.uk/public-patient/rehabilitation-exercises/foot-pain>

<https://www.physio-pedia.com/Metatarsalgia>

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