

STIFF BIG TOES

Hallux rigidus is a condition in which there is no up and down motion at the 1st MTPJ (big toe joint). Lack of proper movement at this joint often leads to an abnormal and painful gait (walking) pattern.

Symptoms: The most common symptom of hallux rigidus is pain on forward motion of when you attempt to push off when walking. As this joint no longer functions correctly, the load around the joint when walking increases which can lead to the formation of *corns* and *callus*.

Treatment: Your podiatrist will assess your foot and identify the severity of your hallux rigidus. As hallux rigidus is a bony problem, this deformity often requires surgical correction to restore some joint function. If surgery is not your preferred option your podiatrist will assess your foot to determine if supporting the foot or toe will provide relief.

Hallux Limitus: This term describes a condition in which the hallux (big toe) has a significantly reduced amount of up and down motion. This lack of motion is predominantly caused by over *pronation* which causes 'jamming' of the 1st MTPJ (big toe joint). Continual 'jamming' of this joint can cause a bony outgrowth to form on the top and side of the joint. The presence of this bony outgrowth leads to further reduction of joint motion. Limitation of the 1st MTPJ leads to changes in gait (walking) patterns. These altered gait patterns cause increased pressure below the hallux (big toe) causing the end of the toe to be pushed upwards like a 'ski jump'. This toe shape will often cause the nail to cut holes in the toe of the sock as it rubs against the toe box of the shoe.

Symptoms: The most common symptom of hallux limitus is pain within the joint during activities that require a large amount of up and down motion of the 1st MTPJ (e.g. crouching, walking, running). This pain is generally at its greatest when propelling off the foot in a forward motion. Pain may also be present in the arch due to osteoarthritic changes in the joints around the 1st MTPJ.

Treatment: Your podiatrist will assess your foot and identify the severity of your hallux limitus. As hallux limitus is predominantly caused by damage to the joint, often over *pronation of the foot*, a treatment plan to control this motion, with the use of *orthotics*, will be implemented. Surgery may also be indicated depending upon the severity of any bony outgrowth. If left untreated hallux limitus can progress into *hallux rigidus* which can lead to an abnormal and painful gait (walking) pattern.