

# Hammer Toe

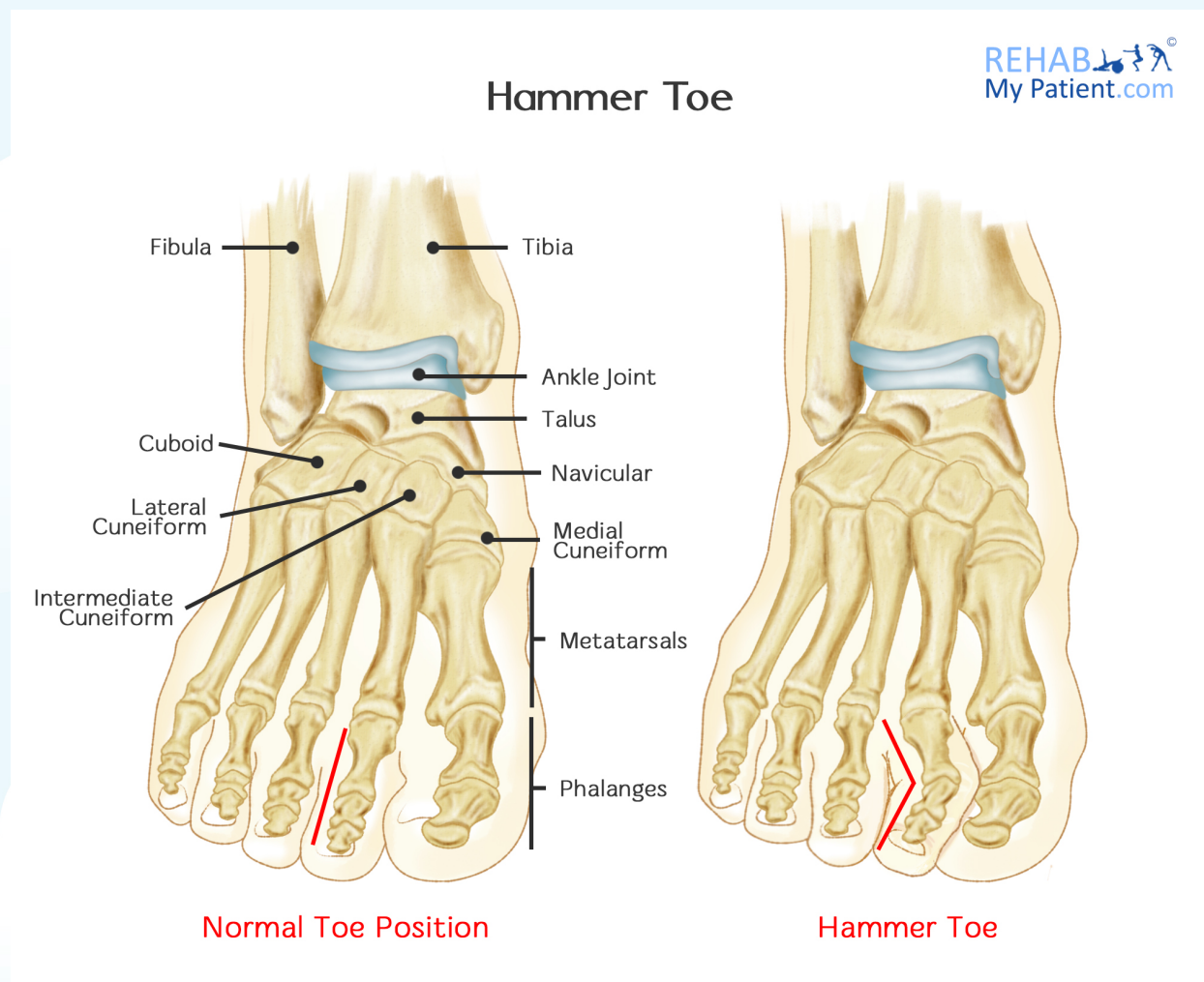
Hammer toe is a type of deformity that often occurs in women who wear shoes that are too narrow or too high of a heel. These particular types of footwear will often force the toes up against the front part of the shoe, which creates an unnatural bending in the toe.

For those who have hammer toe, there is an abnormal bending in the middle joint of the toe. In cases of mallet toe, the joint closest to the toenail is affected. Hammer toe and mallet toe will often occur in the toe that lies closest to the big toe.

Relieving the pressure and pain associated with the condition might involve making changes in your footwear and using a shoe insert. If you have a more severe case of hammer toe, you might have to undergo surgery to get the relief you seek.

## Hammer Toe Anatomy

Toes are an integral part of the forefoot. They help with your balance, movement and walking. The big toe contains two bones inside of it. The second through the fifth toes all have three bones in them each. This condition is often the direct result of the joint being bent into a position that isn't normal.



## How to Treat Hammer Toe:

### 1. Change Your Footwear

If your toe is still able to move, it might be necessary to change your shoes to something that is a lot more comfortable and roomier. You want something that allows you to put orthotics into them to help provide you with the extra cushioning needed. Wearing an insert or pad can help to reposition the toe and minimize any pain and pressure on the foot.

### 2. Strengthening Exercises

In addition to the shoe changes, you might also need to perform exercises to help strengthen and stretch the toe muscles. For example, you might need to pick marbles off the floor using your toes or that of a thin towel. These exercises help to strengthen the muscles in your toes and keep the joints flexible.

### 3. Podiatry / Therapy

Seeking the help of a podiatrist, chiroprapist, or other manual therapist is important to check the state of your feet, to prevent problems before they occur. If you have the signs of a foot or toe problem, you should seek help as their expertise can help to manage the problem and stop it developing.

### 4. Surgery

If the aforementioned treatments don't work, it might be necessary to undergo surgery to help release the tendon preventing your toe from being able to lie flat down. In certain instances, it might be necessary to remove parts of the bone to help straighten the toe out.



## Tips:

- When it comes to your footwear, you want to make sure you are wearing proper shoes to help minimize pain. Low-heeled shoes that have a deep toe box and a flexible material that covers the toes might help.
- Don't ever buy shoes that feel too tight or ones that squash your toes too much.
- Avoid trying to shave or cut a corn from your toe.
- For those who have poor circulation or diabetes, foot wounds can easily get infected. You should seek medical advice on how to manage your feet if you have diabetes.
- Allow adequate space for your toes to help relieve pain and pressure. You need at least a half-inch of space between the inside of your shoe and your longest toe.