

Metatarsophalangeal Joint Osteoarthritis

Metatarsophalangeal arthritis is wear and tear to the foot joint. It usually occurs from years of excessive force going through the joint causing cartilage loss.

Osteoarthritis tends to be the main cause of disability in the US and UK. It can strike at any point in time, and it means pain within a joint, but it tends to affect the older age groups. Even though there isn't a cure for osteoarthritis, there are numerous treatment options from which you can choose. It is imperative that you seek help from an early stage to begin the path to wellness as quickly as you can. With treatment, those who have osteoarthritis are able to manage their pain, remain active and live fulfilling lives without having to undergo surgery.

Metatarsophalangeal Joint Osteoarthritis Anatomy

In each one of the feet, you have five metatarsal bones running from the toe joints to the arch. The first metatarsal is a lot shorter and thicker than the other bones, which are often similar in size. During the push-off phase when walking, running or jumping, the body weight is transferred to the metatarsals and toes. The first and second of the metatarsals take the majority of the force.

Most problems with the metatarsals develop when there is something that changes with the way the foot works normally, thus affecting how the weight is distributed. This places excess pressure on the metatarsals in the foot, which leads to pain and inflammation, especially in the heads of the metatarsals, which are the rounded ends of the bones connecting with the toe bones.

How to Treat Metatarsophalangeal Joint Osteoarthritis:

1. Anti-Inflammatory Medication

To help minimize swelling in the afflicted area, an anti-inflammatory medication has proven beneficial to countless individuals.

2. Brace or Walking Stick

Using a cane or brace can help to relieve undue pressure and stress on the affected foot. The more you can take the added weight off the injured foot, the better it is going to feel.

3. Weight Control

Even though you might not realize it, extra weight can cause an increase in the pain and swelling brought on by osteoarthritis. If you are able to lose weight and get into an ideal weight range for your height, you will notice a difference in the way you feel.

4. Physical Therapy

Therapy will help to improve range of movement to the stiff joints, reduce inflammation, and improve force dissipation in the foot to offload stress on the joint.

5. Steroid Injection

A cortico-steroid injection may be used at the joint to reduce inflammation. Some people may find the improvement short-lived.

6. Orthotics

To help protect and cushion the foot, orthotics are ideal. Placing these inside of the shoes will deliver a degree of cushioning that you won't have in your shoes alone. The more cushioning your feet have, the less pain you are going to feel.

7. Surgery

If all else fails, then a consultant surgeon might be quite keen to do surgery. This usually involves screws going through the foot joint to fuse it, then stopping any further wear and tear and inflammation.

Tips:

- Since the ability of cartilage to heal itself tends to decline as you grow older, older individuals are a lot more likely to end up developing the disease.
- Maintaining a healthy weight is ideal to preventing undue stress on your joints.
- If you have a family history of arthritis, there is a good chance that you will develop the disease as well.
- Injured joints are seven times as likely to have osteoarthritis, even when the injuries are properly treated.
- Physical therapy can help with strengthening the joints in the foot and delay the effects of osteoarthritis.