

## Toe Pain

### WHAT'S CAUSING PAIN IN MY BIG TOE?



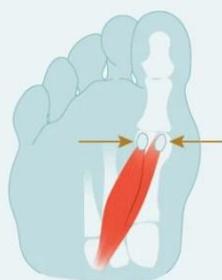
**Bunion**



**Ingrown toenail**



**Turf toe**



**Sesamoiditis**



**Gout**



**Broken toe**

### What is Toe Pain?

Toe pain can affect any part of the toe, including joints, nails, or surrounding soft tissue. It can result from injury, overuse, poor footwear, or underlying medical conditions.

## Common Causes

- **Injury or trauma** – stubbed, jammed, or broken toes
  - **Arthritis** – inflammation of the toe joints
  - **Gout** – sudden, severe pain usually in the big toe
  - **Bunions** – bony bump at the base of the big toe
  - **Hammer toe / mallet toe** – abnormal toe position causing pain
  - **Ingrown toenails** – nail growing into the skin
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## Who Gets Toe Pain?

- Older adults with **arthritis or gout**
  - Athletes or people who **exercise regularly**
  - People wearing **tight or ill-fitting shoes**
  - Those with **foot deformities** (bunions, hammer toes)
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## Symptoms

- Pain in one or more toes
  - Swelling, redness, or tenderness
  - Stiffness or difficulty moving the toe
  - Pain during walking or standing
  - Pain at rest (e.g., gout flare-ups)
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## Self-Care & Home Management

- **Rest** – avoid activities that worsen pain
- **Ice** – 10–15 minutes, 2–3 times daily for injury or swelling
- **Footwear** – wear shoes with wide toe boxes and good cushioning
- **Elevation** – raise foot to reduce swelling
- **Pain relief** – paracetamol or NSAIDs if safe for you
- **Avoid tight socks or shoes**

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## Exercises

1. **Toe Stretch:** Gently pull toes upward or spread them apart, hold 10–20 seconds
2. **Toe Flexion & Extension:** Curl and straighten toes 10–15 times
3. **Towel Scrunches:** Place a towel on the floor and scrunch it with toes 10–15 times

A physiotherapist can provide **specific exercises** depending on the cause of your toe pain.

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## When to See a Physiotherapist or Doctor

- Pain **does not improve** after 1–2 weeks
  - Severe swelling, redness, or deformity
  - Difficulty walking or performing daily activities
  - Suspected **fracture or gout flare-up**
  - Ingrown toenails with **infection**
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## Treatment Physiotherapists May Offer

- Hands-on techniques: **mobilization, stretching, massage**
  - **Exercise programs** for strengthening and flexibility
  - Advice on **footwear, orthotics, or taping**
  - Education on **activity modification** to reduce pain
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## Prognosis

Most toe pain improves with **conservative care** within a few weeks. Early assessment and consistent exercises reduce the risk of **chronic pain or deformity**.

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## References

- NHS – Toe Pain: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/toe-pain](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/toe-pain)
- Chartered Society of Physiotherapy – Foot & Ankle Guidance

