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## Claw Toes

Claw toes can best be described as abnormal flexion in both toe joints of the lesser toe.

The causes of claw toes are:

- 1) Inappropriate footwear
- 2) Flat feet
- 3) Highly arched feet
- 4) Hereditary factors
- 5) Bunions
- 6) Long toes
- 7) Various diseases e.g. rheumatoid arthritis
- 8) Trauma such as stubbing the toe

Symptoms of claw toes:

- 1) Claw toes can be subject to cramping and on occasion can cause cramping within the foot or even the leg
- 2) Corns may form on top of the toes as a result of pressure from a shoe, or on the end of the toes
- 3) Bursitis that is inflammation of a small sac of fluid under the skin and overlying the joint. The top of the joints will appear red and swollen
- 4) Ulceration can form particularly where the circulation is reduced



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- 5) Infection can be a complication of claw toes particularly where general health is not good

Treatment and advice for claw toes:

- 1) Consideration of footwear is very important. A deep toebox with soft leather uppers is ideal. With certain medical conditions customised shoes are often required
- 2) Good fitting hose which is not restrictive is advised
- 3) Certain types of felt padding can be used to reduce pressure loading
- 4) Applying an appropriate moisturising cream is often helpful
- 5) The use of silicones, which can be purchased pre-packed in the form of tubes
- 6) Podiatrists can mould silicone rubber to the toes, which is often very successful. For example a silicone prop to the second, third and fourth toes
- 7) Routine footcare to address corns and callouses
- 8) Specific footcare for episodes of bursitis, ulceration or infection associated with claw toes
- 9) Consideration of a surgical procedure such as an arthroplasty for a permanent solution.
- 10) Where there are claw toes and they are associated with biomechanical factors, orthoses can be very helpful in assisting with re-alignment, particularly for flexible claw toes.