

Welcome to Queensferry Podiatry

Established in 1999, we have dedicated over 25 years to providing a professional and welcoming podiatry service. Our expertise includes:

- Routine issues, such as nail problems, hard skin and corns.
- Diabetic foot care and check-ups.
- Musculoskeletal problems.
- Orthotic fitting.
- Nail surgery.

- ✓ Our podiatrists are degree trained.
- ✓ Registered with the Health Care Professionals Council (HCPC).
- ✓ Members of the Royal College of Podiatrists.

Individual Advice:

Contact Information



Forth Physio, 27 High Street
South Queensferry, EH30 9PP



Phone
0131 331 1296



Email
queensferrypodiatry@gmail.com

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Hallux Rigidus (Big Toe Arthritis)



Guidance for Patients



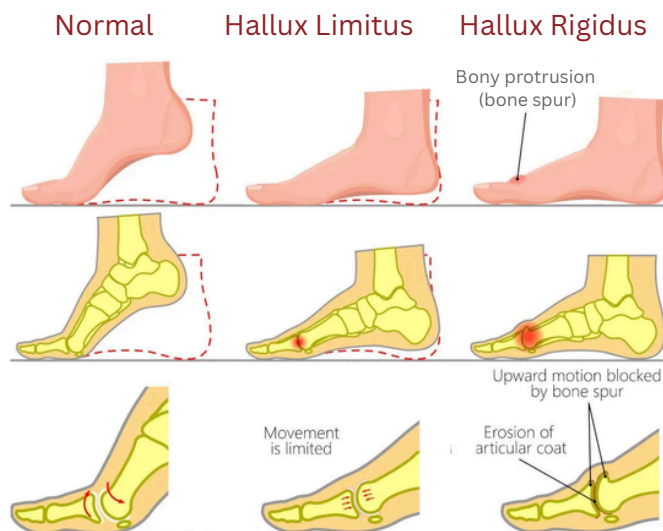
What is Hallux Rigidus?

Hallux Rigidus is a common and progressive form of osteoarthritis that affects the joint at the base of the big toe. This joint plays a pivotal role in foot mobility and forward propulsion during walking, running, and climbing stairs. When affected, it leads to joint stiffness, pain and upward toe movement.

When you have arthritis in a certain joint, the joint degenerates and your body tries to repair it by growing more bone. This creates bony protrusions called bone spurs. These overgrowths of the big toe bone can make it difficult or even impossible to bend your toe.

The excess bone growth can also lead to fusion of the joint and a fixed, non-bending joint. The result is a stiff toe (hallux rigidus).

It is the most common arthritic condition of the foot, especially in adults over 50.



What Causes it?

Often there is no definite cause: as with other joints the big toe is subject to wear and tear and cartilage becomes progressively thinned and damaged.

Acute trauma such as sprains or toe fractures can compromise joint integrity, leading to early-onset arthritis.

Hallux rigidus can also be secondary to gout or other inflammatory conditions that can cause damage to the joint.

Certain foot types may predispose to early jamming of the big toe and wear and tear.

Symptoms

- Pain in or around your big toe. It usually feels like the pain is on the top of your toe, but you may feel it deeper or inside your toe, too.
- Swelling around your big toe joint.
- Losing range of motion in your big toe (how far you can comfortably move it).
- Often, footwear can be more challenging as compression can aggravate symptoms along with over-movement of a stiff joint.
- A bump may also form on the top of the big toe joint as the condition progresses.

Long-term management often includes: weight management to reduce joint load and activity modifications (avoiding repetitive toe flexion e.g. hill walking).

What can Help

Footwear plays a vital role in managing big toe symptoms. Our podiatrists recommend:

- Rocker-bottom shoes: to minimise the big toe joint motion during toe-off.
- Stiff soles: to stabilise the foot and reduce joint stress.
- Wide toe boxes: to avoid compressive irritation over bone spurs.
- Avoiding high heels and soft-soled shoes that increase joint load.

Treatment

Orthotics - An insole or orthotic is reinforced across the full width of the forefoot to restrict movement of the big toe joint to avoid painful movement.

Manipulation/exercises - Exercises typically focus on improving flexibility and strength in the big toe and foot. Common exercises include toe stretches, towel curls, and calf stretches to enhance mobility and reduce stiffness.

Corticosteroid injections - If there is inflammation present, injection of a steroid may be useful to help reduce pain.

Surgery - In severe cases, if conservative treatments fail, surgery may be considered. These can range from joint-preserving procedures to more invasive surgeries aimed at relieving pain.