

Hallux Limitus/Hallux Rigidus

Hallux Limitus is simply limited motion of the big toe joint. The big toe joint typically will go through a 55-65 degree range of motion. With Hallux Limitus this motion may be reduced to 25 or 30 degrees. Hallux Rigidus is a rigid motion or complete absence of any motion of this joint. As like a bunion deformity this is a bone structural deformity.

Symptoms of Hallux Limitus or Rigidus besides limited motion may be pain with all motion or at the end range of motion. Pain may occur only with heavy activity, or even at rest. You may see an enlarged big toe joint, more on the top of the foot rather than the side as seen with bunions. There may also be a noted redness or swelling associated with this bump. Some of the symptoms seen with Hallux Limitus or Rigidus may be seen in other medical conditions like gout, or other arthritis entities. There may be a callous underneath the second metatarsophalangeal joint or on the big toe itself from friction and extra pressure caused by the toe deformity.

Causes of Hallux Limitus or Rigidus are most likely due to the foot structure you were born with. If your foot type excessively pronates then this condition is more likely to develop. The first metatarsal may be longer in relation to other metatarsals or may be elevated causing a jamming of the big toe joint. Trauma or other surgery of your foot may predispose you to having the condition if your foot structure is altered.

Prevention of Hallux Limitus or Hallux Rigidus is difficult since it is due to the structure of the foot you were born with. Many times surgery is recommended for the condition. Proper shoe wear and controlling the structure of your foot at all times may be the easiest treatment. A shoe with a wider toe box to accommodate the foot structure as well as avoiding high heeled shoes is necessary. If the area is irritated with redness, swelling, and pain some ice and anti-inflammatory medications may be helpful. The best prevention may be to get advice from your podiatrist.

Podiatric Care may include using other anti-inflammatory oral medications or an injection of medication and local anesthetic to reduce this swelling or if a bursitis is present. When you go to your doctor, x-rays are usually required to evaluate the structure of your foot and determine how much damage has been done to the bone. The podiatrist may see you to take care of any corns or calluses that develop due to the bone deformities. They may advise you on different footwear or prescribe a custom made orthotic to try and control the foot structure especially if you have excessive pronation. Your podiatric physician may also recommend a surgical procedure to actually fix the structural problem of your foot.