

Bunions

Description:

A Bunion, technically called hallux valgus, is a foot misalignment of the big toe creeping towards the second toe, causing a bony protrusion on the inside of the foot at the metatarsophalangeal joint (MTP). Often times the misalignment causes the MTP joint to become painful with inflammation.

The cause of bunions is typically due to tight, narrow shoes and wearing heels. Most shoes in our culture have a heel even in men's shoes; however, the popular sex appeal of women wearing high heels causes more women to acquire bunions than men. Bunions can also be caused by genetics as reflected in my feet (Haddad, 2016) as I had the adolescent bunion. I have had bunions since I was ten years old, and I very rarely wore heels more than one inch. However, my Dad had bunions, and both of my Grandmothers had bunions.

Symptoms:

- Big toe creeps towards 2nd toe
- Bony protrusion at the MTP joint on the inside of the foot
- Pain
- Inflammation
- Callus or corn on bunion

Benefits of Yoga	Precautions
Mindfulness of foot placement and alignment. I.e: noticing if heels are rolling in, and working to create muscles to avoid the rolling in (Bowman, 2015).	TRY to buy shoes with a big toe box, allowing the big toe enough room to point straight. Avoid pointy-toe shoes and heels. Don't put style ahead of foot and whole-body health. As a woman I have adapted the motto, "I am confident enough in my femininity to not have to prove it by wearing heels!" IMHO, heels are the western version of Chinese foot binding – both cripple the feet!
Stretches and massage to create more space in between toes and better foot alignment.	From my observation of my friend's experiences, it is far better to be proactive in keeping bunions from progressing, than reactive and having bunion surgery. While my Dad had

	successful bunion surgeries on both of his feet, some of my friends' feet were butchered in surgery, and never the same.
Toe splints that fit in between the big toe and 2 nd toe to keep the big toe in alignment can prevent the progression of bunions (Haddad, 2016).	Proper foot placement in yoga poses is important to avoid pain. Also, notice foot placement when in balancing poses. Splints might need to be worn when balancing to keep big toe in alignment.
Wearing minimal 5-finger toe shoes helps keep the big toe aligned properly. The minimal shoe also helps build muscles in the feet most people don't realize they have. A person has to slowly increase wearing time before wearing these shoes full time (Bowman, 2015). I love, love, LOVE hiking in my 5-finger toe minimal shoes!	Dancing with bunions is a challenge. Most ballroom dance shoes for women have heels and pointy toes. Ballet flats can be worn, but need to be large and wide enough to allow toe room. Ballet poses are NOT kind to bunions. When I was 19 years old taking ballet in college, I had to drop out because 1 st position (heels together w/ toes pointed outward) put too much pressure on my bunions causing pain. I was so disappointed because I wanted to major in Dance.
Exercises to prevent fallen arches and flat feet will also help prevent further development of bunions (Bowman, 2015).	When doing the interlace fingers between toes exercise, do NOT grip the thumb around the bunion! I did that the first time, and....OUCH!!

Mini Flow:

- While seated, interlace fingers between toes
 - flex/curl toes
 - draw toes backward.
- Sit with feet flat on floor
 - Try lifting each toe individually
 - Finger assist can be done (Mroz, 2019)
- With feet flat on floor, attempt to move big toe away from 2nd toe. Finger assist might be necessary (Bowman, 2015).
- Practice balancing poses keeping big toe in alignment.
- Wear toe spacer socks.

References:

Haddad, S. MD (Feb. 2016) "Bunions", OrthoInfo, Retrieved from: <https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/diseases--conditions/bunions/>.

Bowman, K. (Apr. 15, 2015) Whole Body Barefoot, Propriometrics Press.

Mroz, C. (Mar. 21, 2019) "Foundations of the Feet" Holy Yoga Therapy Training, Retrieved from: <https://holyyoga.net/training/therapy/sessions/foundation-of-the-feet/>.

Personal Experience of having bunions 48 years. Also observing my Dad and Grandmothers who had bunions.