

Tailor's Bunion Treatment Guidelines Handout

A tailor's bunion, also known as a bunionette, is a bony bump that forms at the base of the pinkie (little) toe where it meets the foot. It can cause pain and discomfort, especially when wearing tight or narrow shoes.

Management and treatment

Conservative management

- 1. Footwear changes:** Reduce pressure on the pinkie toe.
 - Wear shoes with a wide, deep toe box.
 - Avoid high heels and narrow-toed shoes.
 - Use a stretching device to widen shoes if necessary.
- 2. Padding and taping:** Cushion the affected area and correct toe alignment.
 - Use over-the-counter bunion pads to cushion the bunionette.
 - Tape the toes to hold them in their correct position.
- 3. Orthotic devices:** Provide support and reduce pressure.
 - Use over-the-counter or custom-made orthotic inserts.
 - Consider placing a spacer between the toes.
- 4. Medication:** Manage pain and reduce inflammation.
 - Take NSAIDs like ibuprofen or acetaminophen.
 - Use topical NSAIDs (creams or ointments) as needed.
- 5. Icing:** Reduce swelling and alleviate pain.
 - Apply ice or cold packs wrapped in a thin towel to the pinkie toe.
 - Use for 15-20 minutes, several times a day.
- 6. Physical therapy:** Strengthen foot muscles and improve flexibility.
 - Perform exercises that target foot and toe muscles.
 - Stretch the calf muscles to alleviate pressure on the feet.

Surgical management

Indications for surgery

Consider surgery if:

- Conservative treatments fail to relieve symptoms.
- Walking or daily activities are severely affected.
- There is significant pain and swelling.

Surgical options

- **Mild cases (Type 1):** A simple exostectomy (removal of the bony lump) may be sufficient to address the problem.
 - **Moderate cases (Type 2):** An osteotomy (cutting and realigning the fifth metatarsal bone and the little toe joint) may be performed to correct the underlying structural issues.
 - **Severe cases (Type 3):** In severe cases, more extensive procedures like a medial midshaft or proximal wedge osteotomy may be required to significantly reposition the fifth metatarsal and restore proper foot alignment.
 - **Soft tissue realignment:** In addition to bony procedures, soft tissue realignment techniques may also be utilized to adjust the surrounding ligaments and tendons and improve the overall foot mechanics.
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Prevention

1. **Footwear recommendations:** Wear shoes with a wide toe box and good arch support. Avoid narrow, pointed shoes and high heels.
 2. **Regular monitoring:** Regularly check feet for any signs of bunion development.
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Additional notes

Cleveland Clinic. (2024). *Tailor's bunion (bunionette): Causes, symptoms & treatment*. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/tailors-bunion-bunionette>

Watson, S. (2023, November 28). *Everything you should know about tailor's bunion* (A. Biggers, Ed.). Healthline. <https://www.healthline.com/health/tailors-bunion>