

Flat Feet and Morton's Neuroma

By Dr. Jon DeGorter, DC, Jonas Chiropractic Sports Injury Care



You might feel a pain near the ball of your foot like there's a pebble inside your shoe or think your sock bunched up only to find nothing there. If you've experienced this and it persists you most likely have Morton's neuroma, which happens when the tissue in your foot gets thicker next to a nerve and the resulting pressure irritates the nerve and causes pain. Other symptoms you may include intense pain in the ball of your foot that radiates into your toes, a tingling sensation, or numbness in the toes or ball of the foot. If it is not treated, a neuroma can develop into a sharp, burning, or shooting pain that worsens over time.

What causes Morton's neuroma?

Morton's neuroma is caused by long-term pressure from injury, irritation or compression on one of the nerves that lead to the toes. The repeated stress from running can cause it, and certain foot defects including bunions, and hammer toes predispose you to Morton's neuroma. Flat feet or foot overpronation makes you biomechanically susceptible to a neuroma.

Morton's Neuroma Treatment

One of the most important measures you can take to help alleviate foot pain caused by Morton's neuroma is buying proper footwear. This means shoes with good arch support and a broad toe box that allows the toes to spread out.

A sports injury specialist can recommend exercises that will improve the strength and flexibility of the arches. These include stretching the calf, achilles, lower leg and plantar fascia along the bottom of the foot, as well as exercises that strengthen foot muscles.

Biomechanically engineered custom orthotics offer unique therapeutic features that have helped many runners with a neuroma and other foot problems. You can get your custom-made orthotics made by Foot Levelers at Jonas Chiropractic. Insurance may cover the whole product, depending on your coverage.

A sports injury specialist will provide specific treatment for a neuroma through manipulation of the phrenic nerve and the bones of the foot to encourage the release of the trapped nerve and contribute to healing with increased circulation.

Chiropractic treatment will bring benefits from increased circulation and good spinal alignment, so the weight of the body is evenly spread across the feet. Treatment may range from joint mobilisation and alignment techniques, massage, muscle and joint stretches, to taping, or orthotics. Your foot posture muscles are vital to correct the biomechanics that led to the overload injury. Without correcting your biomechanics a neuroma may recur with the repeated stress and overload.

Surgery should be considered as a last resort. While it can be effective, surgery can result in permanent numbness of the affected toes.

Treating Flat Feet

Although you may not be experiencing significant pain from your flat feet, it can cause not only Morton's neuroma but also contribute to other conditions like shin splints, plantar fasciitis, hammertoe, and bunions. Flat feet can also cause problems with your ankles, knees, hips and lower back when it alters the alignment of your legs and spine, which affects your biomechanics.

Custom-designed orthotics with arch supports molded to the contours of your feet can help relieve the pain caused by flat feet. Chiropractic adjustment can restore proper joint mobility, address muscle imbalance and reduce the stress on painful areas while improving your biomechanics.

Active Release Technique Can Help Your Foot Pain

ART® can be very beneficial in the treatment of Morton's neuroma and flat feet, through the use of active massage that works the muscle, tendon and ligaments with applied pressure to lengthen tissues, and find scar tissue, and assess where the body has compensated for the dysfunctional area by placing stress elsewhere. ART® is very successful in treating foot pain, and is why many sports teams have ART® practitioners on staff to treat athletes who develop foot problems.

Active Release Technique, Graston Technique and Cold Laser therapy have been proven to be one of the most effective, safe, and completely natural methods to treat pain and balance the body. **ART®** combines intense active movement-based massage and joint mobilization techniques, which sets it apart from passive massage and physical therapy. At **Jonas Chiropractic Sports Injury Care** you receive a personal treatment plan geared to your training or recovery goals. We begin by understanding what you do, as it relates to your sport or daily activity, and create a plan with a goal. We are dedicated to keeping up with the most effective procedures that provide significant positive results. These can include stretching, strengthening, manipulation, cardiovascular exercise, and other modalities to thoroughly cover all the bases. Our multidisciplinary approach leaves no stone unturned. Our approach is as unique as you are.

Dr. Jon DeGorter is the USATF-Long Island Chair of the Sports Medicine Committee, and part of the Jonas Chiropractic Sports Injury Care team. Dr. Jon specializes in treating runners and triathletes — keeping athletes doing what they love to do.