

MEET THE EXPERT



As featured on TV 22
The Haverhill Journal

Sports Injuries to the Feet

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Can you believe that our feet hold one-quarter of the body's bones? Each foot contains 26 bones, 107 ligaments and 19 muscles. If any one of these become out of alignment it affects the rest of the body, similar to how an unaligned car affects the ride. That's why it's important to treat our feet well and seek appropriate medical treatment when they are injured.

The most common sports-related injuries

According to the American Academy of Podiatric Medicine, the most common sports-related injuries to the feet are turf toe, tennis toe, ankle sprains, stress fractures and broken toes.

- Turf Toe happens when the big toe's main joint suffers a sprain through either jamming or hyperextending the toe. The condition received its name because most injuries occur when the toe becomes caught in the turf. Treatment includes rest, applying ice and compression to the area to prevent swelling, and elevating the toe. As for preventing future injuries, wearing a stiffer shoe can help along with splinting the toe or using special orthotics.
- Tennis Toe is subungual hematoma that occurs when blood accumulates under the toenail, usually as a result of a trauma, but improper shoes can also be the culprit. For those who want a fast recovery, it is best to have a podiatrist drain the blood.
- Ankle Sprains typically occur when the foot turns inward and the ankle goes outward, inverting the joint. This damages the ligaments and causes swelling and pain on the outside of the ankle. To treat a mild ankle sprain, keep weight off the injured ankle, apply ice and wrap the ankle in a compression or ACE bandage to reduce swelling, and finally make sure to elevate the ankle. If the sprain does not improve within 3 to 5 days consult your podiatrist or doctor.
- Stress Fractures are incomplete cracks in the bone caused by overuse and heal with rest. Track athletes suffer the highest amount of stress fractures and about 7 to 15 percent of all athletic injuries are stress fractures. Symptoms include pain, redness and swelling. Finnish researchers discovered that certain conditions such as high foot arch, leg length inequality and excessive inward turn of the foot were associated with stress fractures. Extra padding in shoes may help prevent stress fractures.
- A Broken Toe needs prompt medical attention even if you can walk. A podiatrist can diagnose if the broken bone is a simple fracture or an angulated break. Either way, the podiatrist can realign the bone to promote fast and complete healing.

Remember our feet support our bodies and it's important to take care of the body's foundation. Consult your podiatrist if you have additional questions about treating or preventing sport injuries to your feet, or check out the American Podiatric Medical Association's web site at apma.org.

Disclaimer: This information is not a substitute for medical advice. All content is for general informational purposes only. The content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

For more information, call Dr. Greenblott: (978) 556-9700.

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