

HALLUX RIGIDUS (STIFF BIG TOE)



Overview

This condition, also known as hallux limitus, is a form of degenerative arthritis that affects the joint at the base of the big toe. It causes pain and stiffness in the big toe, which increases over time as the toe becomes increasingly rigid and hard to bend.

Causes

In many cases, the cause of hallux rigidus is not known. It is common in people who have defects of the foot such as fallen arches or pronation (a condition in which the foot rolls inward when walking). These defects, as well as strenuous activities, place stress on the big toe and can lead to osteoarthritis. Some people may also have a genetic predisposition for developing hallux rigidus.

Symptoms

Symptoms may include pain and stiffness in the big toe when the foot is in use or during cold weather, swelling, inflammation and redness around the joint, dull pain in the hip, knee or lower back, and limping.

Treatment

Treatment options include custom orthotic devices for the shoes, anti-inflammatory medications, corticosteroid injections, and physical therapy. Severe cases may require surgery. Surgery options can range from shaving bone spurs (osteophytes) that have formed on the joint, fusing the joint, or performing a joint replacement.

