

Overview

Osteoarthritis (OA) is a condition that causes joints to become painful and stiff. It's the most common type of arthritis in the UK and is often referred to as 'wear and tear' arthritis. Most people will experience some OA related joint pain as part of normal, age-related changes.

Osteoarthritis causes the protective cartilage on the ends of your bones to break down, causing pain, swelling and problems moving the joint.

Symptoms of foot osteoarthritis

OA can affect any of the 33 joints in the feet but commonly affects those across the top of your midfoot & Big toe joint. These joints are prone to wear and tear from the pressures of walking and can be exacerbated by other foot conditions.



The main symptoms of osteoarthritis are:

- Joint pain and stiffness.
- Problems moving the joint / reduced flexibility.
- Localized swelling and tenderness.
- Grating or crackling sound when moving the affected joints.

Causes of osteoarthritis

The exact cause is not known, but several things are thought to increase your risk of developing osteoarthritis, including:

- Joint injury - overusing your joint when it has not had enough time to heal after an injury.
- Age - your risk of developing the condition increases as you get older.
- Family history - osteoarthritis may run in families.
- Overweight - being overweight puts excess strain on your joints.
- Sex - osteoarthritis is more common in women than men.



How to help your osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis is a long-term condition that cannot be cured, but it doesn't necessarily get any worse over time and sometimes your symptoms can gradually improve. We recommend a number of treatments to help reduce your symptoms:

- Take regular exercise to maintain your mobility.
- Lose weight - if you are overweight consider weight loss as it significantly reduces the stress & strain through your joints. (*Leaflet available*)

www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/start-the-nhs-weight-loss-plan/

- Supportive shoes are one of the most important things to help support your foot joints - ensure your shoes have a robust sole and secure top fastening. (*Leaflet available*)
- Orthotics (insoles) can help to reduce the strain on your joints during your everyday activities. If you would like to use insoles follow the links for some useful examples.



www.amazon.co.uk/PRO-11-WELLBEING-Metatarsal-Fasciitis/dp/B00Z099HQO

www.shoeinsoles.co.uk/express-orthotics-firm-density-blue-34-length-insoles.html

Always build up the use of insoles gradually over a week and stop use if you have any new pain.



If your symptoms are more severe, you may need additional treatments or surgery. Surgery for osteoarthritis is only needed in a small number of cases where other treatments haven't been effective or where one of your joints is severely damaged.

Useful links and resources:

- **Versus Arthritis** - Provides help and support for people in the UK with arthritis, plus their families and friends. Tel: 0800 5200 520, Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm. www.versusarthritis.org

If your symptoms have not improved to a manageable level or you have any concerns please contact the Podiatry department on: 01633 615225 option 1 or risca.podiatry@wales.nhs.uk

**This document is available in Welsh /
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg.**