



Protect Your Feet and Ankles from Winter Weather

With ice, snow and subzero temperatures comes the risk for serious foot and ankle problems for anyone who spends time outdoors during the winter.

When the wintry mix hits, we often see patients with ankle sprains, broken ankles and foot stress fractures caused by slips and falls on icy sidewalks and steps. If you have suffered a foot or ankle injury after a fall on the ice or snow, be sure to seek care as soon as possible—either in our office or the closest emergency department—and follow these guidelines until you can be evaluated:

Initial Treatment

- ▶ Follow the RICE method (rest, ice, compression and elevation) to decrease pain and reduce swelling.
- ▶ Use an elastic bandage, splint or brace to immobilize the joint to eliminate motion.
- ▶ Avoid walking or putting weight on the joint until we can determine the extent of ligament damage caused by the injury.

Tips to Avoid Winter Ankle/Foot Injuries

- ▶ Keep areas around outside doorways well-lit so icy patches are visible.
- ▶ Wear shoes or boots with a traction sole that can prevent slipping.
- ▶ Check for slippery spots before getting out of a car or walking on stairs.

“But I Can Still Walk on It...” Debunking Broken Toe Myths

Myth 1: “A Doctor Can’t Do Anything for Broken Toes”

Although it is not true, many people believe this myth and never get proper treatment for toe injuries. In fact, if a fractured toe or metatarsal bone is not treated correctly, serious complications may develop.

For example:

- The bones may become deformed, thereby limiting the ability to move the foot or causing difficulty in fitting shoes.
- If a fracture occurs in a joint (the juncture where the two bones meet), arthritis may develop. Arthritis may also result from angular deformities that develop when a displaced fracture is severe or has not been corrected properly.
- A fracture that does not heal correctly can lead to the need for surgery.

Myth 2: “If You Can Walk on It, It’s Not Broken.”

Many people believe this is true and continue to walk on their injured foot despite having a fracture. This can cause further damage to the foot or toe.

Symptoms of a foot fracture include:

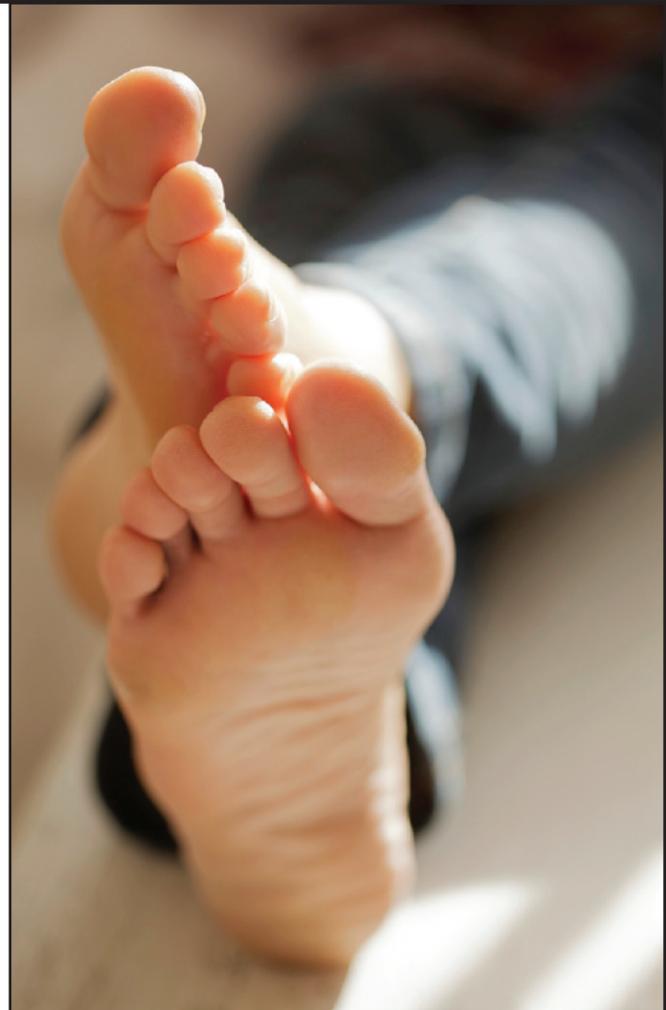
- pain at the time the fracture occurs and perhaps for a few hours later, but the pain often subsides after several hours;
- misshapen appearance of the toe;
- bruising and swelling the next day.

In addition to fractures caused by foot trauma, some people (especially those who participate in sports or who suffer from osteoporosis) may get a stress fracture in their foot without any noticeable cause. Although one can walk on a foot with a stress fracture, these tiny hairline breaks should not be ignored as they can return unless properly treated.

You may have a stress fracture if you notice:

- pain with or after normal activity;
- pain that disappears when resting and then returns when standing or during activity;
- pain at the fracture site when touched;
- swelling but no bruising.

**Contact our office
immediately if you suspect
your toe is broken.**



No matter what myths prevail, fractures of the foot require proper treatment. Even if your fracture has been treated in an emergency department, follow up with our office to avoid improper healing and possible long-term consequences.

Getting Fit in the New Year

Did you make a New Year's resolution this winter to get in shape in 2015? Each year, such resolutions spike attendance at gyms, draw runners, walkers and bikers to the roads and trails and encourage us to dust off our home exercise equipment. "No pain, no gain" may be a motto for most workouts, but "too much too soon" can lead to unwanted pains, such as foot and ankle injuries, and can sabotage your fitness goals.

Sprained Ankle

One common sports injury is a sprained ankle. If you sprain your ankle, do not "play through the pain." Proper treatment and rehabilitation of ankle sprains are crucial to ensure adequate healing.

Stress Fracture

A stress fracture may feel like an ankle sprain at first, but you may notice some additional warning signs, such as swelling without bruising and pain during normal activities or when touching the area. If you experience any of these symptoms, make an appointment with our office as soon as possible to have an evaluation. And remember, don't walk it off! Improper treatment or no treatment at all may lead to improper healing, which could result in prolonged inactivity, or possibly surgery.

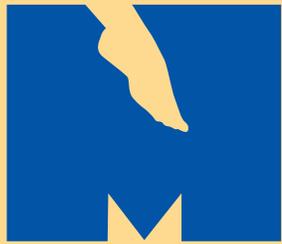
Achilles Tendonitis

If you finish your workout and notice any pain or swelling around your Achilles tendon, seek treatment immediately as this could be indications of Achilles tendonitis. If left untreated, a stretched or strained Achilles tendon may worsen over time, leading to stiffness and fatigue in your injured leg and may require surgery and rehabilitation.

Heel Pain

If you have heel pain that lasts for more than a few days or worsens when standing after sitting, you may have plantar fasciitis—inflammation of the tissue. If caught early, our office can help with non-invasive therapies or surgery to help relieve the pain and correct the issue.

If you have injured your foot or ankle during a New Year's workout, don't ignore the pain. Schedule an appointment with our office for an examination. Early treatment leads to a speedy recovery, avoids further damage or subsequent injuries and helps you get back on your feet to enjoy a happy and healthy lifestyle.



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