

# WHAT IS A TAILOR'S BUNION?

**THE DIAGNOSIS:** You have been diagnosed with a tailor's bunion, which is a common foot problem. This is different from a bunion, which is a bump that develops on the inner side of the foot. People with a tailor's bunion experience pain on the outside of the foot, as well as redness, and often a gradual drifting of the little toe over towards the middle of the foot.

**THE NAME:** How did it come to be called this? Tailors used to sit in such a fashion that there would be pressure to the outside of the foot, and the joint located there would become irritated and painful. Another name for this malady is a bunionette.

The swelling at the area, the degree of inflammation, the development of a bursa, can all worsen the pain from the region. A tailor's bunion is affected by the positioning of the foot. If there is a greater amount of pronation, the foot swings outward away from the mid-line of the body. The most practical method of reducing this movement is with foot orthotics. Tighter shoes will cause more pain, as does greater levels of activity.

**TREATMENT:** Naturally, any bump can be protected from pressure with various types of padding. If inflammation has developed in the soft tissues over the side of the metatarsal, a cold laser treatment or a steroid injection can be very effective at reducing the pain. A variety of surgical procedures have been developed to correct the deformity, eliminating the need for padding or shoe gear modification. Depending on where the deformity lies determines what kind of procedure is used.

**WHICH SURGICAL APPROACH:** The technique used to "approach" the site will have a major effect on the recovery. More trauma during the operation means more swelling and pain afterward. Minimally invasive surgical techniques, where the work is performed through tiny incisions, reduces the risk infection. These techniques speed recovery time and reduce post-op pain. Special instrumentation and training is required.

With tailor bunion correction, the metatarsal bone may be cut so that the head of the bone can be moved inward. Other times, simply smoothing a bump or spur will take care of the pain. A roomy but protective shoe or boot is used, but no crutches, casts, or walkers are required for normal healing.

**CONCLUSION:** There are various methods of treating a tailor's bunion. Is the painful bump on the outside of your foot a bump of bone, or just an inflamed joint capsule? Is it a spur of bone that has developed, or a bursa that is causing pain? If some simple home measures have not taken care of the problem, a structural abnormality may be responsible. Nothing wrong with trying some treatments on your own, but recurrent or lasting pain indicates something more is required. With a proper diagnosis, resolution of your foot pain is just a visit away. Visit the doctor at Superior Foot and Ankle Centers for answers to your questions, and relief of your foot or ankle pain.

