

## **MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGHS** **RESEARCH SUMMARY**

TOPIC: **FIXING FOOT DEFORMITIES LIKE HAMMERTOE**  
REPORT: **MB #4725**

**BACKGROUND:** Hammertoe is a deformity of one or both joints in second, third, fourth or fifth toes. This can cause development problems. The bend can be mild to start then can get worse. They can grow more rigid and if left untreated, nonsurgical treatments will stop working. Hammertoes can be caused by shoes that do not fit properly. Its most common cause is a muscle or tendon imbalance, resulting from mechanical or neurological changes in the foot that occur over time. Hammertoes can also be inherited. Contracture of the toe and open sores are also possible symptoms as well that could lead to the foot deformity. (Source: <https://www.foothealthfacts.org/conditions/hammertoe>)

**TREATMENT:** Diagnosis is usually done through X-rays to see bones and joints of the feet. For treatment, if the toes are still flexible, doctors might recommend wearing more comfortable shoes or those with inserts or pads which can reposition your toe and relieve pain. Low heeled shoes with a deep toe box and flexible material covering the toes can help. Adequate space for the toes can help relieve the pressure as well. Picking up marbles or crumpling a towel with your toes are exercises that can help you stretch and strengthen muscles in the toe. There is also the option of surgery to release tendon. (Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/hammertoe-and-mallet-toe/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20350845>)

**SURGERY:** Resection is the removal of bony prominence in a toe joint. Tendon transfer, lengthening or release is re-routing the tendon to put it in a more balanced position. Metatarsal shortening is when doctors shorten the long bone to provide more space for the toe to extend. There is also the option of toe implants, which are an alternative to traditional surgeries. The new procedure inserts a small screw into the bone, which then preserves the correction and is permanent. If you use the implants, recovery is simple. Healing takes a few weeks with full recovery occurring in at most two months. Full recovery may take up to six months where patients must stay off their feet and wear open-ended shoes. The success rate is 85 to 90 percent. (Source: <https://www.myfootandanklecenter.com/blog/new-advancements-for-hammertoe-surgery>)

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS REPORT, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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**If this story or any other Ivanhoe story has impacted your life or prompted you or someone you know to seek or change treatments, please let us know by contacting Marjorie Bekaert Thomas at [mthomas@ivanhoe.com](mailto:mthomas@ivanhoe.com)**