

Common Podiatry Conditions and Terminology



Abscess

- Localized collection of pus in a cavity



Photo Credit: Major Kirk Waibel, MD

Anesthesia

- Loss of feeling or sensation induced to permit surgery
- Common example: Injection given to “numb up” the toe prior to performing an ingrown toenail procedure



Appliances

- Mechanical devices used to support or realign a part of the body or to improve function
- Common Example: Custom Orthotics as they are used to correct biomechanical deficiency



Athlete's Foot (Tinea Pedis)

- ◉ Layman's term ("Athlete's Foot") for a fungal infection of the foot (skin)
- ◉ Common Example: "Interdigital tinea pedis" (between the toes)



Atrophy

- A defect or wasting away in the size of a cell, organ, tissue or part



Bilateral

- Involving two sides
- Sometimes meaning the involvement of both feet



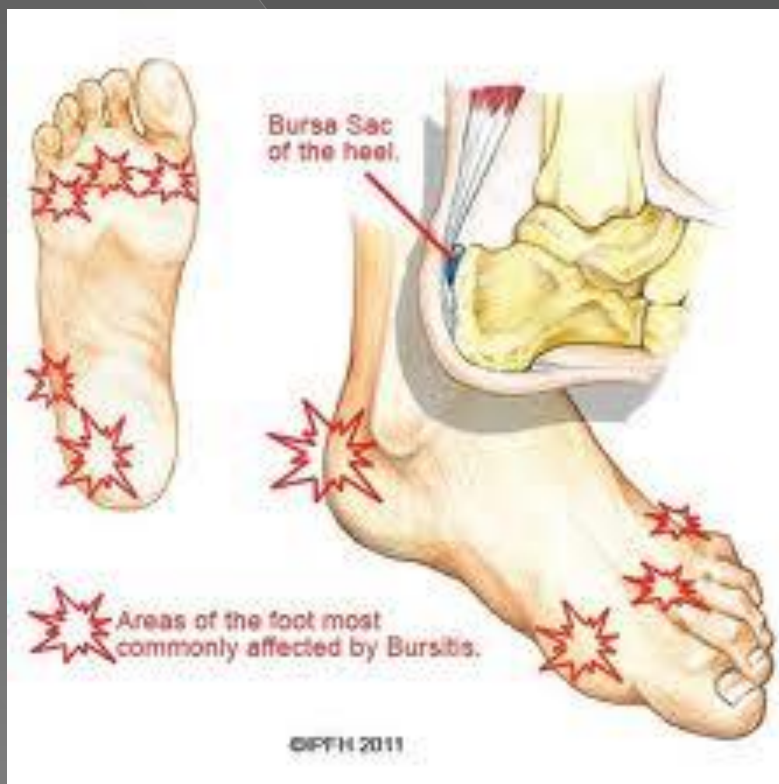
Biomechanical Deficiency

- Malalignment of limbs, muscular imbalances, degenerative processes, and other anatomical factors which may contribute to orthopedic injury
- Common examples/symptoms: hypermobility, structural weakness, pronation, supination, foot, knee, hip and back pain



Bursitis

- The inflammation of a bursa
(Bursa: a closed, fluid-filled sac that functions as a gliding surface to reduce friction between tissues of the body)



Callosity/Callus

(synonymous terms)

- A circumscribed thickening of the skin; hypertrophy of the horny layer from friction, pressure, or other irritation
- Also used to describe the healing following the fracture of a bone



Chiropody

- ◉ Term formerly used to describe the study and treatment of feet – still commonly used in other countries



Contracted Toes

- Also called hammertoes, toes bent upward at the middle joint



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Corn

- A horny induration and thickening of the skin, usually found on the toes, that is produced by friction and pressure followed by irritation and pain
- Common Example: between two toes that rub together due to deformity



Cyst

- Pouch or sac, normal or abnormal, especially one that contains liquid or semisolid material
- Common Examples:
Ganglion cyst



Diabetes

- A metabolic disorder of blood vessels and nerves secondary to the inadequate ability of the pancreas to produce insulin and the body to utilize it in metabolizing glucose
- It is especially important that diabetic patients visit their podiatrist regularly, manage their blood glucose levels, and check their feet every day.
 - Diabetic patients may not heal as quickly as non-diabetics and often suffer from a condition known as “neuropathy,” which decreases sensation in the feet.



Debridement

- The medical removal of dead, damaged, or infected tissue to improve healing potential of the remaining healthy tissue
 - Removal may be surgical, mechanical, or chemical and is generally performed on thickened toenails, calluses, warts, and ulcerations



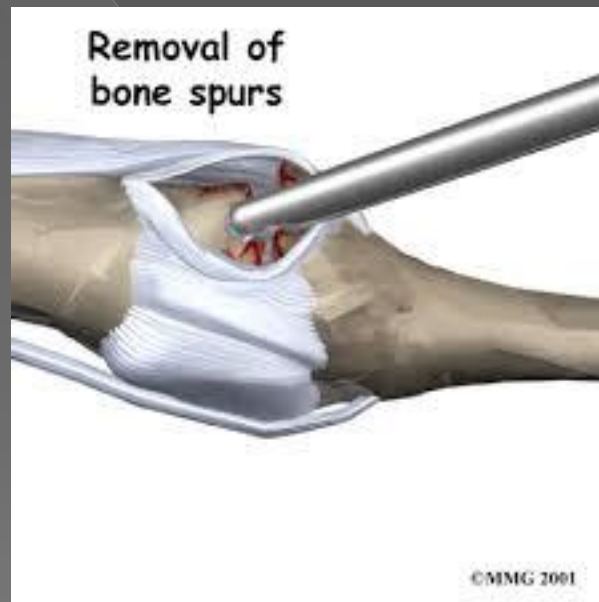
Edema

- Swelling; the presence of an abnormally large amount of fluid in the tissue of the body
- Examples shown here:
 - Lower left (non-pitting edema: suggestive of a problem with the lymphatic system)
 - Circled picture (pitting edema: suggestive of a circulatory issue)



Excision

- The act of cutting away or taking out tissue, bone, etc.



Exostosis

- Bony growth projecting outward from the surface of the bone



Fascia

- Ligamentous tissue, a layer of membrane beneath the skin
- Common Example: plantar fascia
Related Condition: Plantar Fasciitis (inflammation of the plantar fascia)



Fissure

- Any cleft, crack, or groove, normal or abnormal
 - Common Example: Heel fissures (grooves or cracks in callus of heels)



Flatfoot (Pes Planus)

- ⦿ A condition in which one or more of the arches of the foot have flattened out
- ⦿ This causes the foot to roll inward, as seen here.



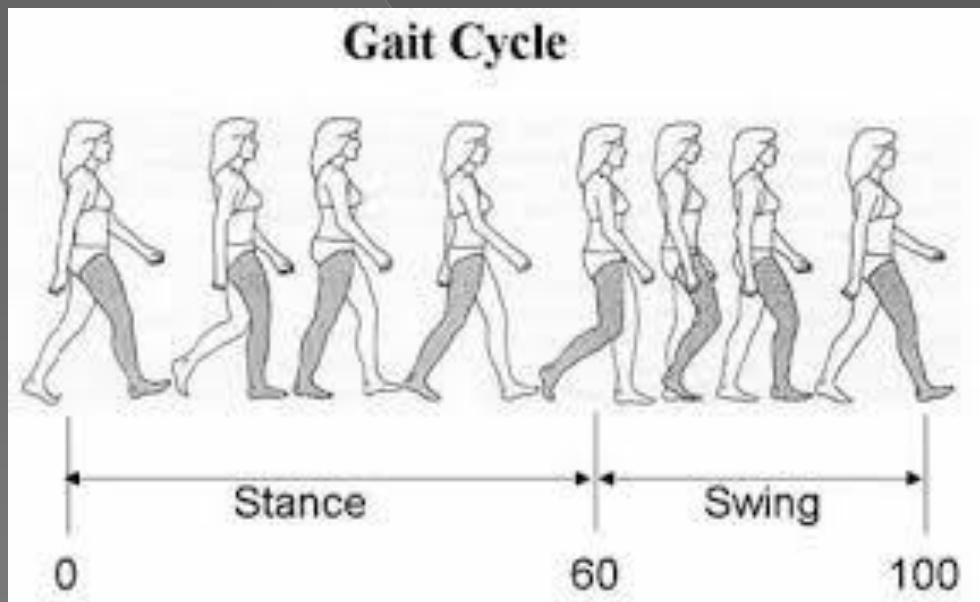
Fracture

- Break in a bone



Gait

- Manner or style of walking
- Podiatrists commonly perform “gait analysis” to see what happens during a patient’s normal walking pattern and to check for biomechanical deficiencies.



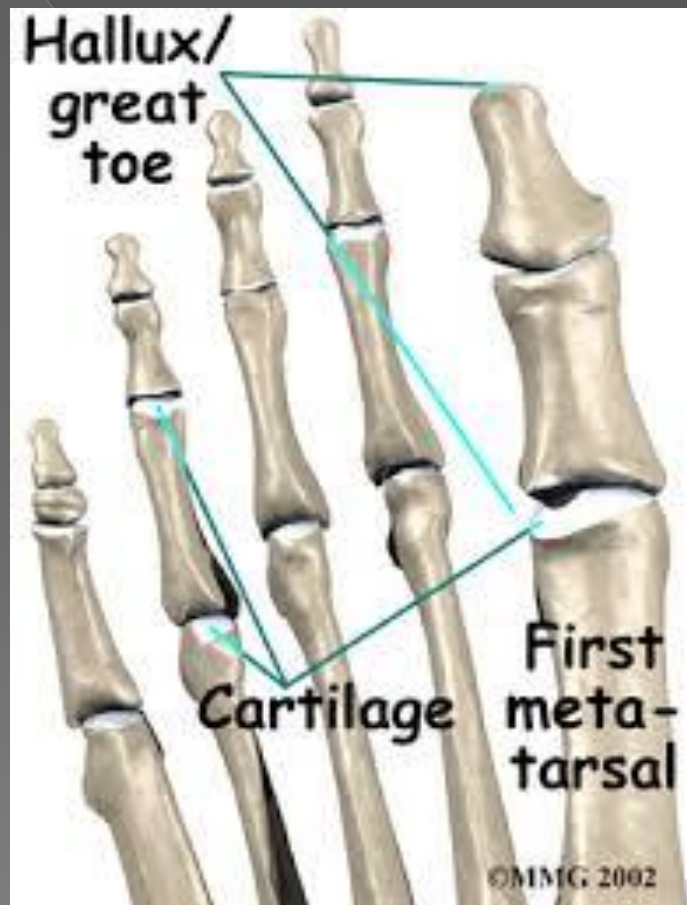
Gangrene

- ◉ Death of a tissue associated with loss of blood supply, followed by bacterial invasion and putrefaction
- ◉ This may be due to an injury, poor circulation, or an infection that was not controlled.



Hallux

- The great toe or first digit of the foot



Hallux Rigidus

- Painful flexion deformity of the great toe where there is almost complete limitation of motion at the first metatarsophalangeal joint
- Often described by the patient as stiff or painful, especially with increased activity



Heloma Durum

- Hard Corn
- Often self-diagnosed by patient as a “wart”



Hydrotherapy

- The use of water for therapeutic purposes; usually warm or hot as in a whirlpool bath
 - Also called hydro-massage.
- Used to soften the skin and nails prior to debridement



Ingrown Nails

- Toenails that break through or cut into the skin or tissue around them, causing pain
- Commonly caused by improper trimming, improper shoes or hose, injury, or congenital disorders



Metatarsalgia

- Term to describe pathology in the metatarsal bones and phalangeal bones of the toes



Neuroma

- A tumor or new growth largely made up of nerve cells and nerve fibers: a tumor growing from a nerve
- Patients often describe symptoms as burning, tingling, or feeling as if their sock is “bunched up” in their shoe.



Onycho-

- The combining word form denoting relationship to the nails
- This prefix, combined with many different suffixes, describes many diseases of the nails.
 - Common Examples:
Onychomycosis (Fungal nail)
Onychocryptosis (Ingrown Nail)



Ossification

- The formation of bone; the conversion of fibrous tissue or of cartilage into bone
- This x-ray of a child's foot clearly shows that the bone formation, or ossification, is not complete.



Osteomyelitis

- Inflammation of bone caused by pyogenic (pus-forming) bacteria
- Long-term ulceration/infection may lead to this type of complication, potentially leading to surgical resection or amputation.



Palliative

- Affording relief, but not a cure
- Palliative treatment in podiatry provides temporary relief of corns, calluses, or nail problems.
- It does not permanently resolve the cause of the problem (as in surgical correction).



Pedis

- ◉ Latin term meaning “foot”



Peripheral Neuropathy

- Damage to or disease affecting nerves which may impair sensation, movement, gland or organ function, or other aspects of health, depending on the type of nerve affected
- Common causes include systemic diseases such as diabetes, leprosy, vitamin deficiency, and medications such as chemotherapy.
- Symptoms include pain, burning, tingling, and numbness of the hands and feet, and may become worse if left untreated.



Phlebitis

- Inflammation of a vein
- Characterized by swelling, stiffness, and pain in the affected part



Pronation

- The result of a combination of factors in the tarsal and metatarsal area of the foot which lowers the arch and allows the forefoot to splay or turn outward from the midline of the body
- Patients with “flat feet” pronate, as shown in this picture.



Resection

- Removal of bone



Sprain

- A joint injury where the supporting ligaments are stretched or ruptured, but the continuity of the ligaments remains intact



Spur

- A projecting bony enlargement
- Common Example: Heel spur, a.k.a. calcaneal spur, or spur of the “Os Calcis” (another term for heel bone)
- A bone protruding from the lower surface of the heel bone



Subungual Exostosis

- Bone spur projected upward under the nail
- Often the cause of repeated ingrown toenails (clearly shown through x-ray)



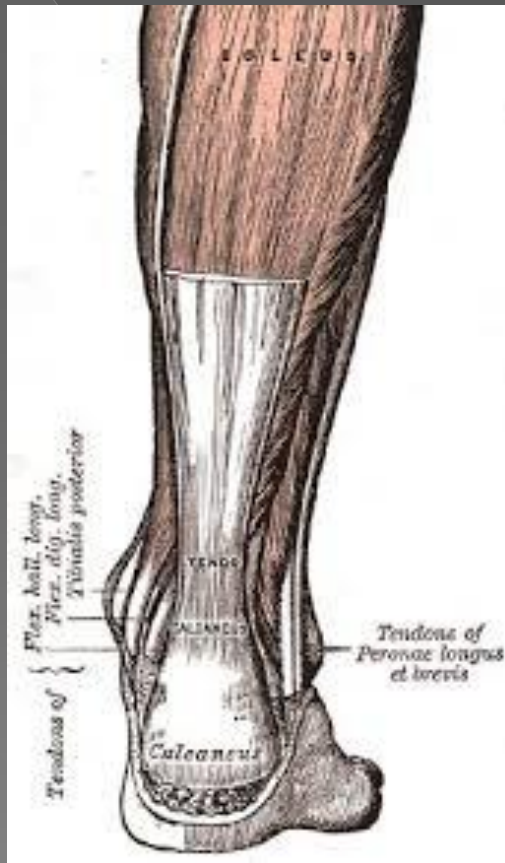
Tendons/Tendinitis

- Tendons are thick cords of tissue that connect muscles to bone.
- Tendinitis, or an inflammation of the tendon, is one of the most common causes of foot or ankle pain.



Achilles Tendon

- The tendon that connects the posterior calf muscles to the heel bone
- The strongest tendon in the body



Tenotomy

- The cutting of a tendon for correction of hammertoes/contracted toes
- When hammertoes are flexible and not rigid, a procedure referred to as a “Flexor Tenotomy” can be performed.
- In this procedure, the tendon is released and the toe is splinted as it heals, resulting in a much straighter toe.



Tumor

- Swelling, more often used to describe a mass of new tissue that persists and grows independently of its surrounding structures
- A tumor has no physiologic use



Ulceration

- An open sore of the skin or mucous surface of a body organ, characterized by gradual disintegration and necrosis (dying) of tissue
 - It is important for diabetics (especially those with neuropathy - tingling and numbness) to check their feet everyday and wear white-soled socks to check for blood



Unilateral

- ◉ Single, one side



Verruca

- A tumorous growth of the skin
- More commonly referred to as a “wart,” and caused by a virus
- The body works to protect the verruca by forming thickened skin (callus) over and around the area which may be painful to the patient
 - Plural Verrucae



Bones of the Foot

26 in Total



Sides of the Foot

Medial = Toward the Inside
Lateral = Toward the Outside



Movement of the Foot

Inversion = Towards the inside of the body

Eversion = Away from the body

Dorsiflexion = Movement where toes are brought closer to the shin

Plantar flexion = Movement which decreases the angle between the sole of the foot and the back of the leg. (The movement when depressing a car pedal)

Abduction = Motion that pulls a structure or part away from the midline of the body.

Adduction = Motion that pulls a structure or part toward the midline of the body

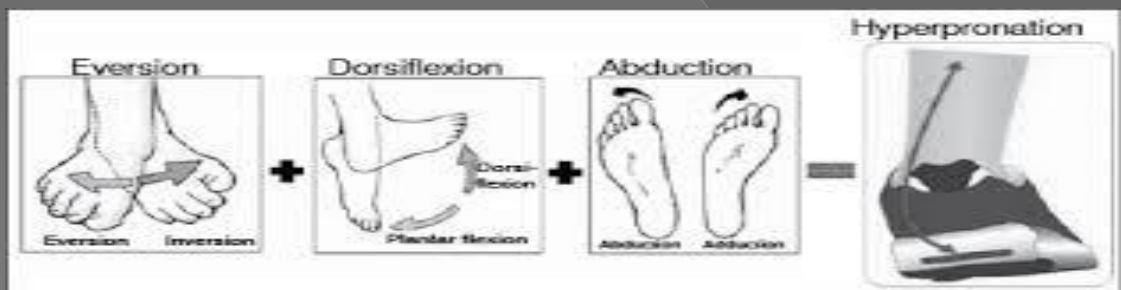


Figure 1. Excessive pronation of subtalar joint.

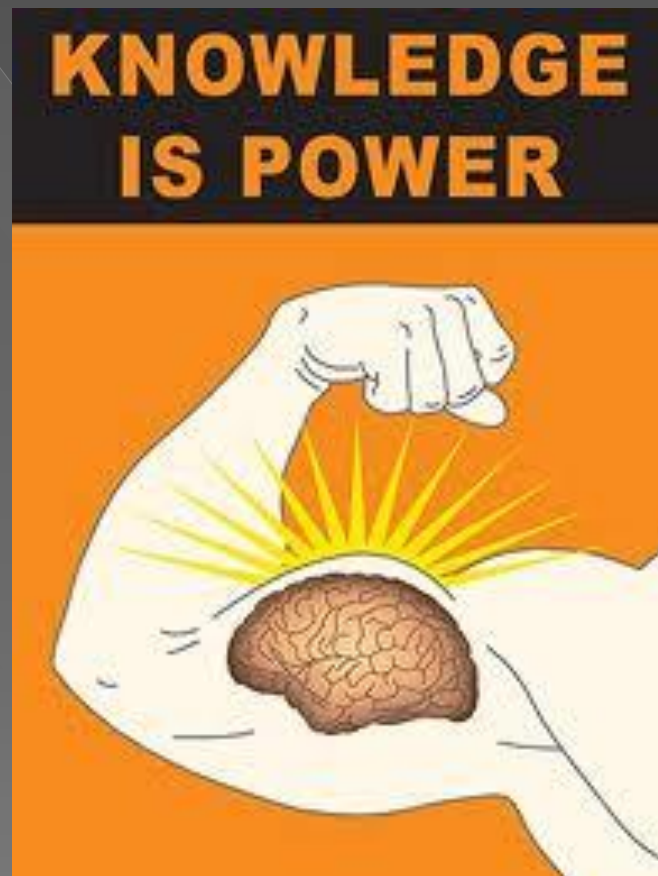
Distal = Away from
(furthest distance from the
body)

Middle = Between

Proximal = Closest to the body



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