



What is it?

Morton's neuroma is the irritation and compression of a common plantar digital nerve in your foot, often causing numbness and tingling in the toes. With a true neuroma, this compression is a result of thickening of the tissue around the nerve itself. Morton's neuroma (named for the first doctor to describe the condition), most commonly affects the common plantar digital nerve between the third and fourth metatarsal bones, which causes pain in the third and fourth toes.

What do people experience?

Symptoms can include:

- Numbness
- Tingling
- Shooting pain
- Burning pain
- Radiating pain to adjacent toes
- Feeling as though sock is bunched up or wrinkled
- Increased pain with activity
- Relief upon removal of footwear

Risk factors

Risk factors for discomfort include:

- High heels
- Tight or illfitting footwear
- High impact activity
- Other foot complications (bunions, hammertoes)

What can you do to feel better today?

- Ensure that footwear has adequate width and extra depth in the toe box. This will allow the foot enough room to splay and help minimize mechanical compression of the common digital nerve from the shoe.
- Try Metatarsal pads. These work to offload the neuroma by supporting your distal transverse arch. Metatarsal pads can be incorporated into a shoe on its own or on a custom made orthotic.
- Decrease high impact activities. High impact activity can increase pressure on the feet and worsen symptoms. Reducing this type of activity and ensuring the use of proper footwear can aid in prevention of symptoms.
- Maintain a healthy weight, which can reduce physical stress and pressure on the foot. Consult your family physician or a dietician for more information and directives.

What are my options for treatment? Who can help?

A stepped approach is often taken for the treatment and management of Morton's neuroma, moving from least invasive to most invasive. Less invasive treatments include metatarsal pads, footwear modifications, and off-the-shelf (OTS) and custom foot orthoses. These options can be discussed with your podiatrist and other healthcare professionals for conservative treatment of symptoms.

More invasive options, such as medication, corticosteroid and sclerosing alcohol injections, and surgery, may be discussed with your family physician to determine an appropriate treatment plan.

Prevention/Prehabilitation

Although the exact cause of Morton's neuroma is unknown, possible causes include irritation, pressure, or injury to the common digital nerve. Proper footwear is a crucial factor in prevention of pain.

Staying active with pain

Staying active with Morton's neuroma is possible. Choosing appropriate type and fit of footwear for the given activity is crucial. Footwear should provide adequate width and depth to reduce mechanical pressure on the foot. High impact activity can increase the amount of stress placed on the foot, increasing irritation and worsen symptoms. Choosing lower impact activities can reduce stresses.

DO YOU SUFFER WITH THE NUMB AND TINGLY TOES OF A MORTON'S NEUROMA?

To feel better, read on!

How can SoleScience help you feel better?

Your SoleScience Pedorthist will create an individualized treatment plan that suits your specific needs, goals, and symptoms. We will work with you to determine not only what we need to do to address your current concerns, but also to prevent future problems.

Your pedorthist will complete a thorough and comprehensive foot examination at your initial appointment. A comprehensive follow-up exam will ensure that you are meeting your goals and allow your pedorthist to reassess your treatment plan (as necessary). During these appointments we will:

- Assess joint and muscle function, including range of motion and gait assessment
- Assess your footwear for both fit and function
- Identify any risk factors that can be modified and make recommendations for change

- Identify areas of risk with specialized tools such as pressure mapping (F-Scan or Pedograph)
- Discuss a treatment plan, which may include a change in footwear, activity modification, or custom foot orthoses and/or a complementary treatment referral (such as physiotherapy)

In addition to your individual treatment plan, your SoleScience Pedorthist will provide you with educational resources to help you best maintain your foot health.

Our take on the need for custom foot orthoses

Custom foot orthoses can be a useful tool in reducing symptoms of Morton's neuroma. Metatarsal pads can be incorporated into the device to support the distal transverse arch, reducing the amount of mechanical compression on the affected nerve. Custom foot orthoses allow the device to be modified to suit your needs. When it comes to Morton's neuroma and metatarsal pads, individual tolerance differs widely. It's possible that very small differences in the device could result in large differences in symptom relief. This makes the ability to modify a device advantageous to ensure maximum comfort.

Custom vs. OTS

OTS, or off-the-shelf foot orthoses, are prefabricated and can be fit to shoes right from the shelf. These devices are matched as a best fit to your foot and are often somewhat customizable. The key factor when looking for OTS devices with Morton's neuroma is the metatarsal pad component to support the distal transverse arch and assist in offloading the nerve.

An OTS device with a metatarsal pad may be enough to relieve your symptoms. If not, custom foot orthoses are manufactured specifically around a 3D model of your foot and are easily modified to suit your needs.

Footwear recommendations

Choosing appropriate footwear can play an important role in the management of Morton's neuroma. When considering shoes, ensure there is adequate width and extra depth in the toe box to avoid excessive pressure on the foot and compression of the affected nerve.