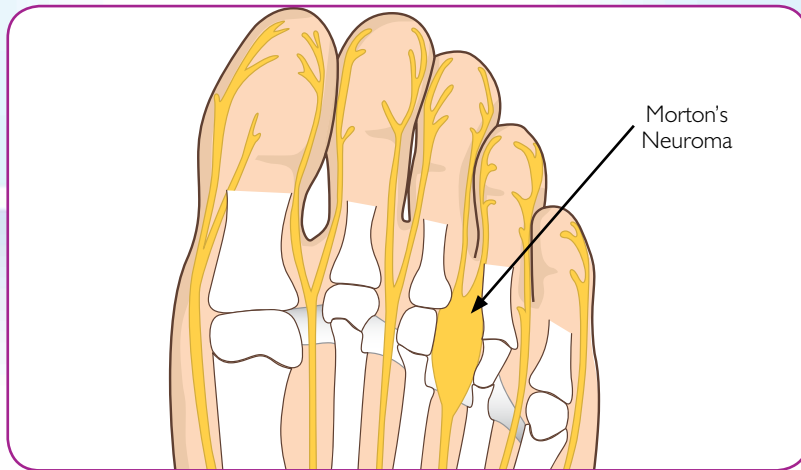


# MORTON'S NEUROMA



## WHAT IS IT?

A Morton's neuroma or neuralgia is essentially an inflamed nerve caught in between the bones in your foot. You might feel like there is a stone in your shoe and this discomfort is usually found between the heads of the 3rd and 4th metatarsal bones. You may also experience numbness, burning or a tingling sensation moving to the tips of the toes in this area.

These are all common symptoms. Patients often state that taking their shoes off and massaging the area is the only way to relieve their discomfort.

This is because the nerve is being compressed and irritated when they walk and by massaging they are spreading the metatarsal bones a little which gives relief.

## DIAGNOSIS

There are thought to be factors that contribute to the development of a Morton's neuroma. Patients with bunions and low arched feet are often sufferers of a neuroma because of their foot type.

There are a few tests that your podiatrist can do to diagnose this. Apart from looking at the foot type and posture, the Mulder's click test is a quick way

to diagnose a neuroma. This allows them to feel the neuroma moving between the metatarsals. This test should also recreate the discomfort the patient feels when they are walking. This is a reasonably conclusive test, however your podiatrist may want to refer you for an ultrasound scan so they can measure the size of the nerve swelling.

## TREATMENT OPTIONS

If the nerve swelling is small then a wide shoe with an orthotic insole which spreads the metatarsal bones out as you walk may be enough to reduce the inflammation and prevent the problem. If the nerve swelling is very large, an orthotic may not be sufficient.

Other treatments include use of painkillers, steroid injections to bring the swelling down, or have the area temporarily numbed (for roughly 8 hours) using a local anaesthetic. Resting the foot

and using ice compresses will also help greatly. If these options are not satisfactorily reducing the discomfort then you may also opt to have part of the nerve removed. This procedure is roughly 75% successful, however it will leave a small area of the foot permanently numb (without feeling) which is unappealing to many people.

Your podiatrist will talk you through all of the treatment options available and will offer you the most appropriate for your symptoms.