

Bunions (Hallux Valgus).

What is a bunion?

A bunion is a painful swelling of the soft tissue, often with bone enlargement over the inside of the ball of the big toe (See Figure(s) 1). Frequently the big toe will look as if is bent in towards the other toes, or in severe cases can cross over the other toes.



Figure(s) 1: Bunions.

What causes a bunion?

The development of bunions may relate to genetic factors, but other factors can also influence and increase the risk of a player developing a bunion. Inappropriate footwear (very tight boots or shoes), worn over a long period of time can contribute to a bunion.

What are the symptoms?

Usually, the player will have pain and swelling in and around the ball of the big toe. This can be from the bone rubbing too much on the shoes and the player may find that they are unable to wear certain types of boots or shoes. When the symptoms are very bad the player will have difficulty training or playing.

What can the player do about it?

The player can separate the big toe and the next one with a small piece of foam or shield the bunion by cutting a hole for it in a piece of padding or wear a specifically designed orthotic to support the bunion. If this does not help the player should see a sports professional (sports doctor or podiatrist).



Figure 2: Orthotic/
Support.



Figure 3: Podiatrist

What can a sports professional do?

A player will need to a sports podiatrist. A sports podiatrist is a professional who specializes in feet. They can make orthotic devices (See Figure 4), for your feet and in certain situations perform minor operations, such as shaving callus (thickened skin) off the side of the bunion. If the player requires other types of surgery the sports podiatrist will refer the player to an orthopaedic surgeon.



Figure 4: Orthotics

