

Exploring Non-Surgical Relief for Foot Pain

New techniques are allowing podiatrists to treat bunions, plantar fasciitis, hammertoes, and pain in the ball of the foot without surgery, the *Wall Street Journal* reports.

Many patients have a misconception that age-related foot ailments can only be treated with surgery.

But experts say nearly all foot problems can be treated with such techniques as ultrasound-guided injections that deliver anti-inflammatory drugs to the precise site of the pain and shock wave therapy that promotes soft-tissue healing.

Other nonsurgical treatments include the use of insoles that redistribute the pressure on the foot and physical therapy. Both approaches aim to address the cause of the foot problems, which can help prevent them from recurring.

“I think people come in wanting surgery because they want a quick fix and want to be back to normal,” said Norman Turner, an orthopedic surgeon at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. “Unfortunately, in most cases surgery isn’t a quick fix because it can take just as long, or longer, to get back on your feet.”

All surgeries carry risks of complications, such as infection, Dr. Turner noted. And even when nonsurgical treatments don’t fully fix a problem, they often delay the need for surgery, which is helpful because some surgical procedures don’t last forever.

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