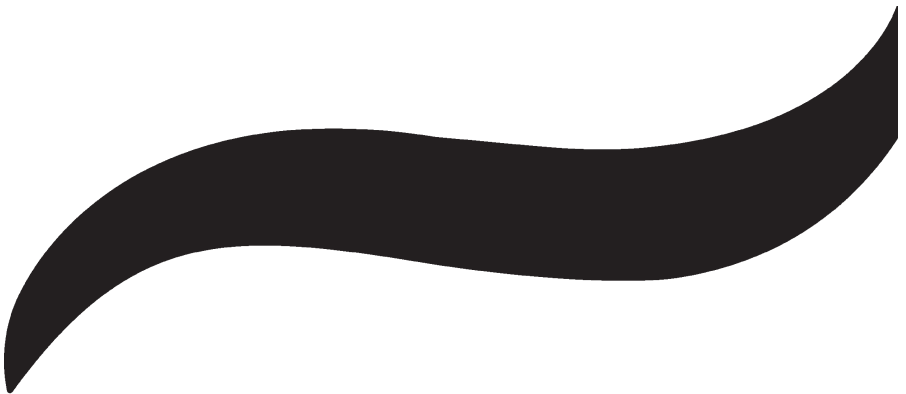




# Tailor's Bunion (Bunionette)

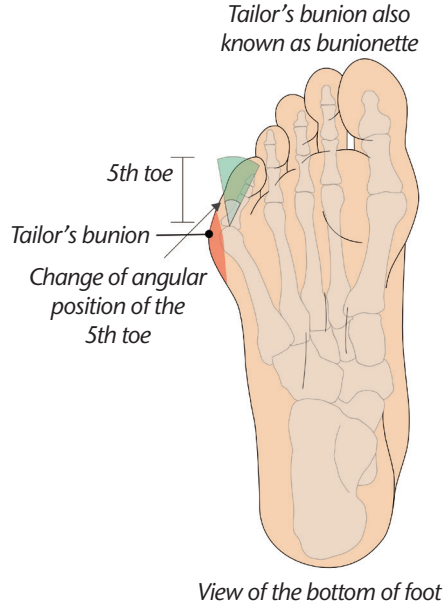
Information for patients  
Podiatry



# WHAT IS A TAILORS BUNION?

A Tailors bunion is a deformity that causes a bony lump, that can also include soft tissue, to develop around the small toe joint on the outside of your foot. Tailors bunions are not as common as bunions.

The bony lump can make your foot wider, making it more difficult to find footwear that is comfortable. Tight fitting footwear can cause rubbing on the Tailors bunion resulting in your skin becoming red, painful and swollen. In some cases the skin can thicken or even blister. On occasion, a bursa can develop over the bony lump which can become inflamed and painful. A bursa is a small fluid filled sack that is found between the bone and the soft tissue and helps to increase shock absorption and reduce friction.

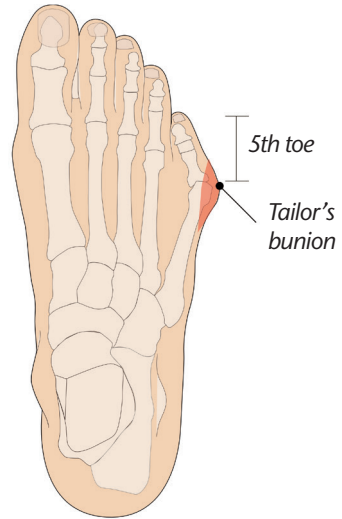


## Classic signs and symptoms:

- ❖ bony lump on the outside of your foot at the little toe joint
- ❖ deviation of the small toe towards the fourth toe
- ❖ pain and swelling around the bony lump
- ❖ inflamed, swollen or hard skin over the bony lump
- ❖ difficulty in finding comfortable fitting footwear

# WHAT CAUSES TAILORS BUNIONS?

The exact cause is unknown, but it is believed that inherited factors (runs in the family) and the shape of the bones in the feet play a big role in the cause. Footwear is often listed as a contributing factor. Poorly fitting footwear will make your foot more uncomfortable. Footwear that is too tight will put pressure on the joint, bursa and surrounding nerves which will lead to pain.



## Other contributing factors

- ❖ Previous injuries/trauma to your toe joints
- ❖ Hypermobility/flexible joints
- ❖ Age
- ❖ Inflammatory arthritic conditions (rheumatoid arthritis, Psoriatic arthritis, etc.)
- ❖ Tightness in the muscles in the back of your leg
- ❖ Neuromuscular conditions (Stroke, Cerebral Palsy, Multiple Sclerosis, Charcot-Marie Tooth Syndrome).

# WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

Most peoples' pain will decrease by following nonsurgical advice that is aimed at easing or removing the pressures caused by the deformity. These measures will not correct or reduce the size or shape of your deformity. It is important to note that if you have any of the above contributing factors you will need to consider making the necessary changes to your lifestyle to help aid your recovery.

The one person who can help you get better is you!

## WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Increased weight will place extra stress on your joints and soft tissues in your feet. Losing even a small amount of weight will make a big difference to this especially when walking, running, or going up and downstairs.

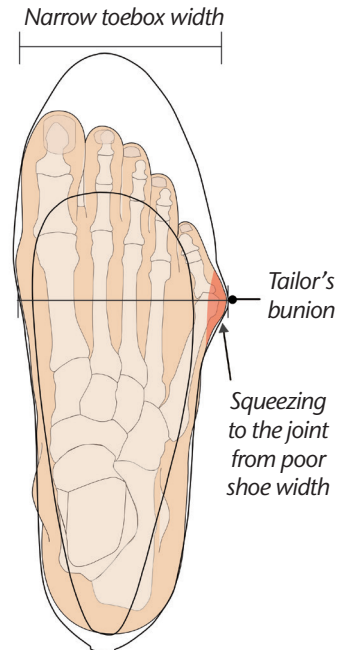


If you need help with weight-control, you can find information, advice and groups you can join to help you manage your weight better. To access the NHS BMI Calculator go to: [www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthyweight/bmi-calculator/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthyweight/bmi-calculator/) or otherwise open your camera on your smartphone or tablet and hold it up to the code and the link should appear on your screen, press this link and you'll be taken to this web address. This guide will help you on whether you should consider weight management.

## FOOTWEAR

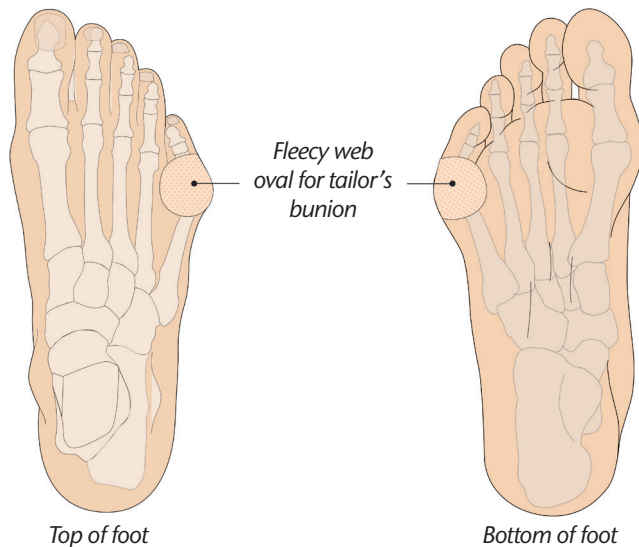
It is important that you choose footwear that is wide and deep enough to accommodate your Tailors bunion. It can also be useful to choose a shoe that has a softer material on the upper. Softer materials can mould around the deformity easier than hard patent leathers.

If your footwear is too narrow it will rub on the Tailors bunion causing the surrounding skin to become red, swollen and in some cases become thickened and even blister.



## PADDING

If you find that the skin or bursa overlying the Tailors bunion becomes inflamed or blisters, covering the area with a plaster (if skin is broken) or padding (fleecy web/ semi compressed felt) should help to reduce the friction and deflect the pressure from the painful area. These can be bought from your local pharmacy or online.



## PAIN MANAGEMENT

Pain medication can help reduce your symptoms, allow you to move more comfortably which will aid your recovery. Your community Pharmacist can provide guidance on specific medication or other methods of pain relief (always read the label and manufacturer's guidelines).

## ICE

If the joint or surrounding skin is swollen and painful place some ice in a damp towel and hold it against the Tailors bunion for 20 minutes every hour. Make sure you use a damp towel between the ice and the skin to avoid ice burn. You could try sports sprays and gel/cool packs, which do a similar job.

## Strengthening and stretching exercises

Current evidence based strengthening and stretching exercises for the muscles in and around your foot and ankle can help to improve your heel pain.

### 1. Calf towel stretch

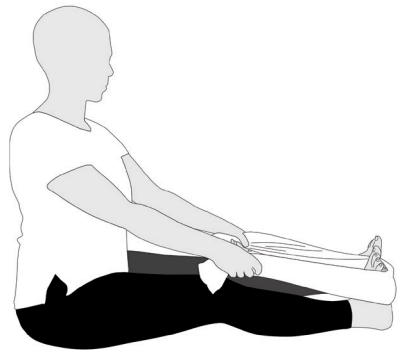
This exercise is designed to stretch the muscles in the back of your leg. Start by placing a towel around the ball of the painful foot keeping your heel in contact with the ground and avoid bending your knee.

Pull the towel towards you until you feel a stretch along the bottom of your foot and the calf muscles in the back of your leg.

Hold the stretch for 30 seconds and repeat three times with a small period of rest in between stretches.

It is particularly useful to perform this stretch first thing in the morning and after periods of rest.

**If you feel this stretching exercise is making your pain worse then focus on the strengthening exercises.**



## 2. Standing Calf stretch

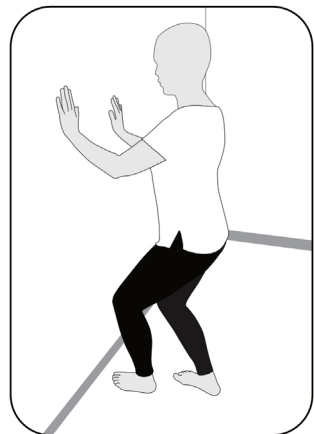
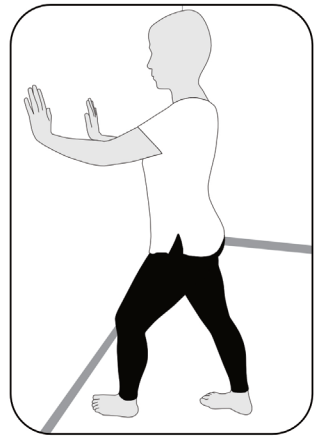
This exercise is done in two parts. First support yourself by placing both hands shoulder height and width apart against the wall. Once supported take a step back with your painful foot. Make sure your heels are in contact with the ground and remain like this throughout this exercise with both feet also pointing forwards towards the wall.

Now slowly begin to bend your front knee whilst moving your upper body towards the wall until you feel a stretch in the calf muscles in the back of your leg.

Hold the stretch for 20 seconds and repeat three times with a small period of rest in between stretches.

The second part of this exercise is designed to stretch the soleus muscle which is one of your calf muscles. Starting in the same position as before slide your painful foot towards the front foot as being demonstrated. Now when bending the front knee also bend the knee of the back leg until you feel a deeper stretch in the calf muscle. Like the other stretches make sure your heel is in contact with the ground throughout the exercise.

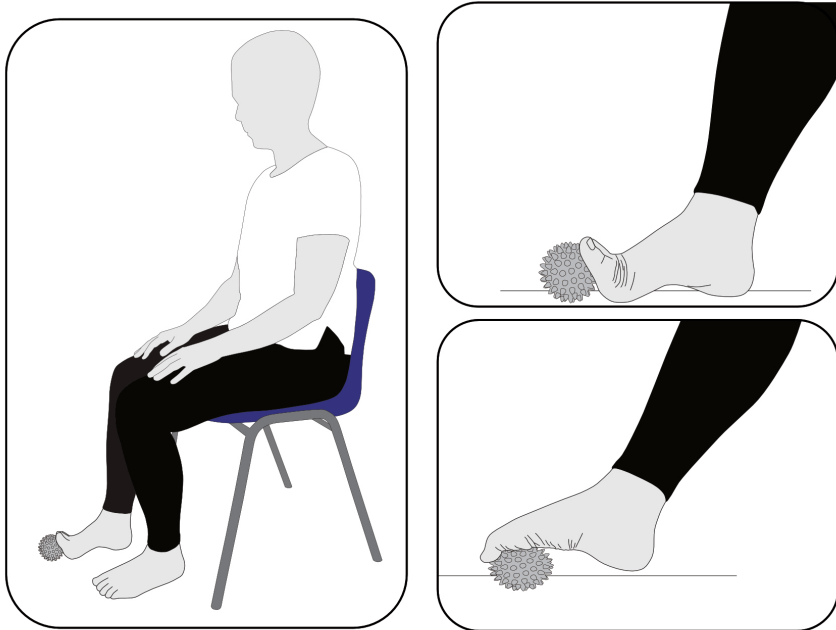
Hold this stretch for 20 seconds and repeat three times. **If you feel this stretching exercise is making your pain worse then please focus on the strengthening exercises.**



### 3. Foot arch exercise

This exercise is designed to strengthen the muscles in the arch of the foot.

Sitting comfortably in a chair, flex your toes against the friction ball with your heel and ball of the foot placed on the ground.



Slowly lift your heel and start to roll the ball under your toes. Your toes must continue to stay in contact with the ball at all times. Hold this position for three seconds and then slowly roll the ball backwards to bring the foot back to its starting position. When rolling the ball back make sure your heel touches the ground first before the ball of the foot.

You should be able to feel the effects of this exercise in the arch of your foot and the muscles in the back of your leg.

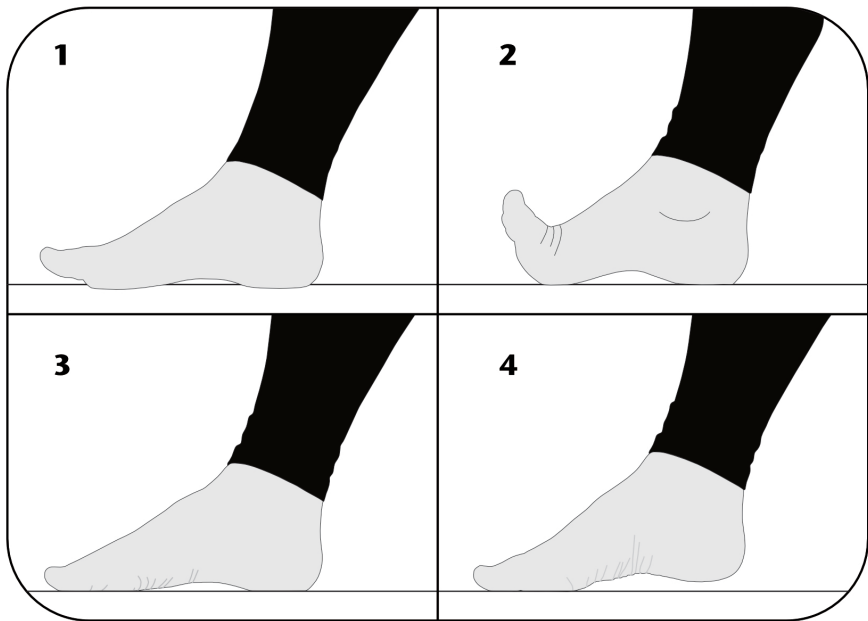


#### 4. Toe motion exercise

This exercise is designed to strengthen the small muscles in your foot and can be done with or without footwear.

In a seated position place your heel and ball of the foot on the ground and lift your toes towards you holding this for five seconds. Slowly bring your toes back down to the ground. Now with the tips of your toes grip the ground and slowly lift your heel up very slightly. Hold this position for five seconds. Relax and bring the toes back towards holding again for five seconds. Continue to work between these two positions for 10 repetitions.

If you experience some cramping in your foot when doing this exercise you should reduce the number of repetitions.

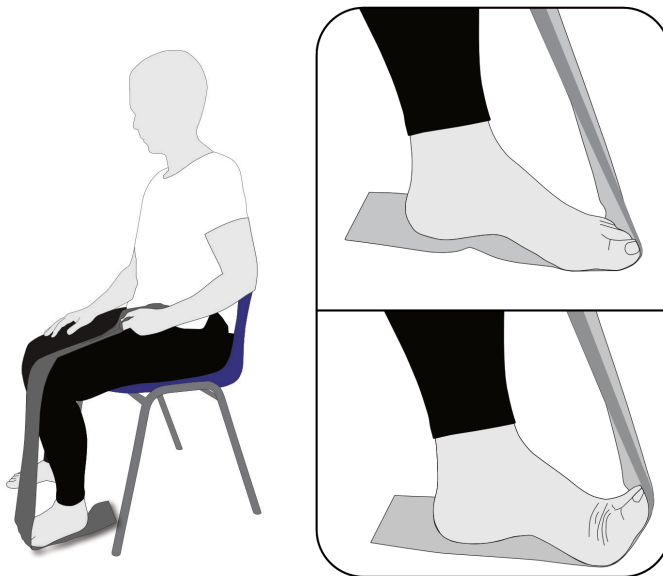


## 5. Intrinsic foot exercises (Theraband)

This exercise is designed to strengthen the small muscles in the foot. This exercise is performed in a seated position making sure your back is straight and leg bent comfortably at 90 degrees with your painful foot placed on a strip of Theraband.

Pull the end of the Theraband over your knee towards you which in turn will pull your toes up into a flexed position. Anchor the band on your thigh maintaining a good level of tension throughout the exercise. Hold the band tight and begin to slowly push your toes down towards the ground against the resistance of the band. When your toes reach the ground allow them to slowly raise back to their starting position.

You are aiming to do three sets of around 10-15 repetitions. You can adjust the difficulty of the exercise by creating more or less tension on the Theraband. Make sure your heel stays in contact with the ground throughout the exercise.



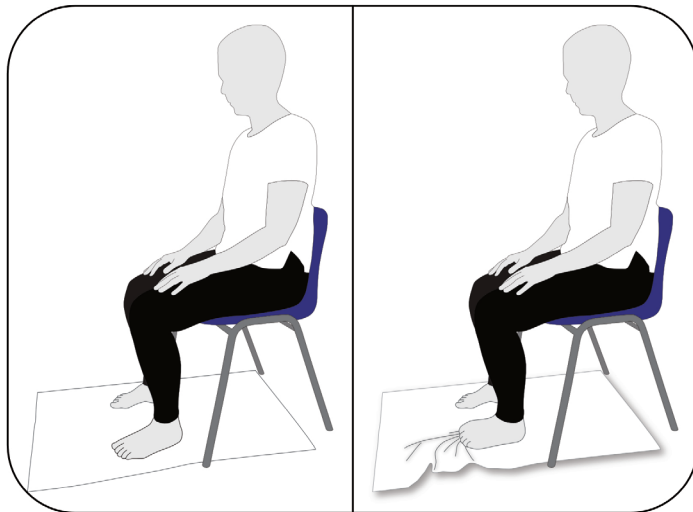
## 6. Intrinsic towel strengthening

This exercise is designed to strengthen the small muscles in your foot.

Start by placing a small towel flat on the ground. This exercise is performed in a seated position making sure your back is straight and legs bent comfortably at 90 degrees.

Place your painful foot on top of the towel and using your toes start scrunching the towel so that it is being pulled towards you. Do this in a slow controlled manner, making sure your heel remains in contact with the ground throughout this exercise.

When you have pulled the towel in as far as possible, flatten it back out and repeat the process between three and five times.



## PATIENCE

Have patience, most people's symptoms should start to improve within three months of following this advice.

## WHAT ELSE CAN BE DONE?

The good news is that your pain should start to improve once you start following the above advice.

If you have any concerns that you are getting worse or notice any changes in the shape of your foot please contact your local MSK Podiatrist or email **PodiatryMSK@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk**.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The information below will answer many of the questions you may have in the early part of your treatment. We aim to ensure your specific needs are considered throughout. A shared decision making process is used by our teams. This means you will be informed about the treatment options open to you the risks and benefits of each option. You will be supported to make a choice about which treatment best meets your needs.

We hope the following questions that have been developed on the back of MSK focus groups, will provide you with some answers and information around your condition.

### What is wrong? Why? What is the cause?

A tailor's bunion is a deformity causing a bony lump that can also include soft tissue swelling to develop around the little toe joint on the outside border of your foot. Tailors bunions are not as common as bunions.

The exact cause is unknown, but it is believed that inherited factors (runs in the family) and the shape of the bones in the feet play a big role in the cause of bunions. Footwear is often listed as a contributing factor. Poorly fitting footwear will make your foot more uncomfortable.

## What is the possible impact on my health and function?

For most people tailors bunions cause no pain or issues. But for some the bony lump can make it more difficult in finding comfortable footwear. Tight fitting footwear can cause the Tailors bunion to rub causing your skin to become red, swollen and painful in some cases to thicken and even blister. Sometimes a fluid filled sac called a bursa can develop over the bony lump which can become inflamed, swollen and painful.

## Will I get better or worse?

The good news is that your pain should start to improve by following non-surgical advice that is aimed at easing or removing the pressures caused by your Tailors bunion. These conservative measures will not correct or reduce the size or shape of the deformity.

If you have any concerns that you are getting worse or notice any changes in the shape of your foot please contact your local MSK Podiatrist or email **[PodiatryMSK@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:PodiatryMSK@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk)**.

## Is it curable?

Unfortunately there is no quick or easy fix, your pain will decrease by following the non-surgical advice that is aimed at reducing or removing the pressures that aggravate the deformity. These measures will not correct or reduce the size or shape of the deformity. It is important to note that if you have any of the contributing factors you will need to consider making the necessary changes to your lifestyle to help aid your recovery. The only person who can help you get better is you!

## How long will it take to get better?

There is no overnight cure for this condition however, your symptoms should start to improve within 3 months of following this advice.

## What are you (the health professional) able to do about my problem?

By using our self-help tool, we would like to help you to better understand your condition and provide you with the tools which should help support your recovery.

## What is the treatment that is most appropriate for me?

Treatment protocols for tailor's bunions almost always start with basic principles and we would encourage you to consider trying some self-help treatment in the first instance before making a referral to your local Podiatry department.

## What can I do to help myself to alleviate it?

We would encourage you to consider trying some selfhelp treatment in the first instance.

## Why am I not improving? Where have I gone wrong?

### Am I doing the right things?

There could be a number of reasons why your symptoms may not be improving. If you have followed the self-help advice for three months and your pain has not started to improve please contact your local MSK Podiatrist or email **[PodiatryMSK@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:PodiatryMSK@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk)**.

## **How can I maintain my function and do the things I want to and need to do?**

If you are in pain do not try and do all your normal daily activities such as housework, at once. Break the harder jobs down into smaller jobs and do something gentler in between. Extensive walking or standing should be avoided if it aggravates your pain. It is recommended to modify activities rather than to fully stop all forms of movement or exercise. Work out what you can do relatively pain free and use that as a starting point. Then over time build up your activity. Track and write down your progress to keep you motivated.

## **What activities can I do and how should I adapt them (e.g. sports, work)?**

Avoid high impact activities like running which will significantly increase load through the Tailors bunion, we would encourage you to participate in low impact activities like walking, swimming, cycling etc. until the pain is at a manageable level.

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND THE USE OF PATIENT INFORMATION

NHS Lanarkshire take care to ensure your personal information is only accessible to authorised people. Our staff have a legal and contractual duty to keep personal health information secure, and confidential. In order to find out more about current data protection legislation and how we process your information, please visit the Data Protection Notice on our website at [www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk) or ask a member of staff for a copy of our Data Protection Notice.

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