

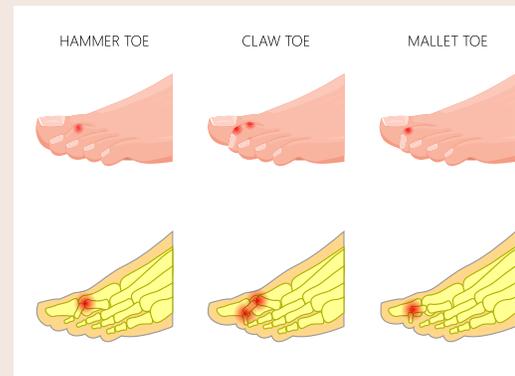


# Know Your Toes!

## The Difference Between Claw, Hammer, and Mallet Toes

It's time for some straight talk!

Sometimes your small toes can have a muscle imbalance that causes them to bend into odd positions. Although this problem can be the result of an underlying condition, more often than not it is caused by wearing shoes that are too small! When footwear doesn't fit properly, it forces toes to bend, and if they stay that way too long, the muscles eventually contract to the point of not being able to straighten. There are three main conditions that result:



**Claw toes** – this is when the toes bend up at the joint where they meet with the feet, then bend downward at the middle and tip joints so they appear curled toward the floor.

**Hammertoes** – typically affecting the second toe, the middle joint juts upward causing the tip to point downward like the head of a hammer. This often occurs with bunions.

**Mallet toes** – also mostly occurring in the second toe (although it can occur in others), this is signified by a downward bend in the joint closest to the tip.

These conditions can be painful and may cause corns and calluses from shoes rubbing against them, as well as difficulty walking. Prompt treatment is necessary to avoid needing to have them surgically straightened, so first—switch those shoes! Make sure your footwear fits and offers plenty of wiggle room. Use products like splints, pads, and inserts to hold your toes in the correct position and protect them from further damage. Finally, ask us about stretches you can do to help your muscles regain proper balance. We'll tell it to you straight (pun intended)!

### A Message From the Doctor

Dr. Gregg Neibauer, DPM



Welcome to our newsletter; we hope you find it interesting and educational.

Fall is a beautiful time of year in Montana, so we hope you find time to get outside and enjoy!

### Get Social w/Us



# Summer's End... Spotting Signs of Skin Cancer



As summer winds down, it's great to look back at all the fun times you've had, but it is also a great time to look for signs of skin cancer that can occur as a result of all that fun in the sun! Spotting signs is key to catching issues early and getting the prompt treatment needed. The best way to do this is by remembering your A B C's (and D's and E's!):

- **A is for Asymmetry.** A mole that is potentially cancerous will have an irregular shape, rather than being symmetrical.
- **B is for Border.** A non-cancerous mole typically has a smooth, even border. An irregular border that is hard to define is a sign of trouble.
- **C is for Color.** Moles should be a single shade of brown or tan, not multiple colors or an uneven distribution of color.
- **D is for Diameter.** Watch for anything greater than 6 millimeters in diameter (or approximately the size of a pencil eraser).
- **E is for Evolving.** If you notice a mole is different than it had been, or seems to be changing in size or color, it should be treated right away.

Remember these tips to keep you and your skin safe, and keep applying that sunscreen!

## Mark Your Calendars

- September 3** College Football Opening Day – Go Griz!
- September 5** Labor Day – enjoy your last summer “hoorah”.
- September 13** Positive Thinking Day – it's sure to be great!
- October 5** National Kale Day – kale chips anyone?
- October 9** Moldy Cheese Day – Really? Why?
- October 28** Frankenstein Friday –  
Pre Halloween warm up?!



# Create a Great Study Space



Now that school's back in session, you'll want to encourage your kids to study, and creating the right environment is key! Let's face it, there are distractions all around us, from phones ringing, to dogs barking, to television and other technology, all of which means it's tough to concentrate, even as an adult! Luckily, you

can improve your children's study habits by following a few simple guidelines:

**Do away with distractions.** Set up a study space void of technology (other than a computer, of course)—no smart phones, television, or social media allowed!

**Keep the study space consistent and well-stocked.** Designate a place for studying and keep pencils, erasers, paper, calculators and other items handy so children don't have to get up and go search for what they need.

**Stay organized.** It can be hard to concentrate in the midst of clutter, not to mention difficult to find everything you need. Make sure the designated study area stays organized and neat.

**Allow breaks.** Just as with adults at work, letting your kids get up and run around a bit or enjoy an afterschool snack helps keep their brains fresh and better focused on their studies when they go back at it.

**Stick to a schedule.** Designating a time for studying and sticking to it helps kids stay on top of their studies and know when it's time to do homework vs. time to play.

**Furnish it for success.** Enough desk space and an upright chair will give your child a place to spread out their work while staying comfortable and alert. Also, make sure there is good lighting as well as ample space for supplies.

**Be available.** If your kids have a question or need any help, make sure you are there to give them the support and encouragement they need!



## Move It! The Benefits of Taking Breaks

Work days are often busy and when you've got a lot to get done, it's best to keep your nose to the grindstone and keep forging ahead, right? Wrong! Studies show that taking short breaks to move around every hour or two actually helps to restore your attention, boosts creativity, and increases your productivity. In fact, stepping away from your computer and taking time to relax your brain allows you to clear your head and return to your work with renewed focus. In addition, even just standing from time to time, stretching a bit, or getting up and walking to speak with a colleague in person instead of by email or phone, helps to prevent physical health issues, too, like poor circulation and even heart problems and diabetes!

So next time you have a long "to do" list, break it up with some activity every once in a while and you'll be more likely to get the work done faster and better, plus stay healthy to boot.

Now, go take a hike! (at least to the water cooler and back)



Alpine Foot & Ankle Clinic

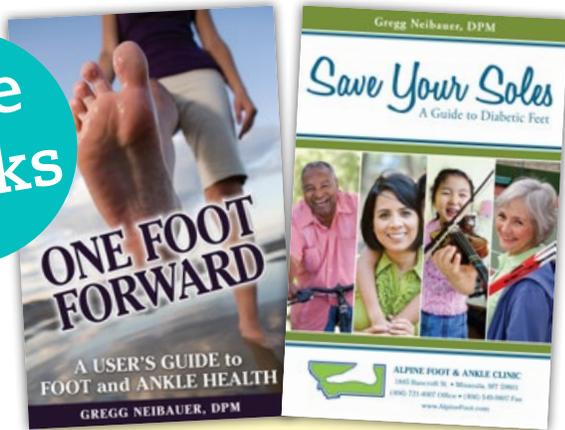
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Dr. Gregg Neibauer, DPM

1845 Bancroft Street, Missoula, MT 59801



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## Before Slipping on Shoes, Slip in Orthotics

If a caring friend offers comfort and support when you need it most, then think of a pair of orthotics as your new BFF! Orthotics can be custom made to fit the contours of your unique feet, providing support in the areas you and you alone specifically need, and easing discomfort of foot pain stemming from a number of different conditions. From flat feet and high arches, to bunions, plantar fasciitis, and more, when you slip in orthotics before you slip on your shoes, get ready to feel better soon!

These devices can be designed to control abnormal motions like overpronation (functional), or simply to provide additional cushion and support (accommodative). They help to distribute weight more evenly as well, which eliminates too much stress on any one area. Best of all, they're not just for athletic shoes. Custom orthotics can even be made to fit dressy footwear, including high heels! Take that, store-bought, only-provide-comfort-and-that's-it inserts!

Simply put, orthotics can help you improve your biomechanics, reduce painful symptoms, correct structural issues, and just plain feel more comfortable and supported. Hey, what are friends for?

If you think you could benefit from custom orthotics and would like to introduce some to your favorite shoes, just ask our friendly staff for more information.