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## **Bunions are bursitis at the base of the big toe often caused by tight footwear.**

Best Oils to help with pain and inflammation:

Basil, Marjoram, Lavender, Peppermint, Cypress, chamomile, and juniper berry.

Make a 10% blend and put it in a base of castor oil in a roller bottle.

Roll on morning and night just before sleep.

The oil mixture will help with pain and inflammation, to correct the problem you need to do the exercises below.

### **Exercises to correct the developing big toe joint:**

The first two exercises do throughout the day or evening, for example while eating or relaxing have towel on the floor you can scrunch with your toes. Do the same with a tennis ball.

- ॐ Exercise #1 Pick up things with your big toes ... Or throw a towel on the floor or napkin and scrunch it up with your toes.
- ॐ Exercise #2 Roll a tennis ball or golf ball under your foot and massage your foot with your thumbs.

Stand up for these exercises, do in the evening after work or before or after playing a sport or working out:

- ॐ Exercise #3 - Lift all your toes and stretch your arch.
- ॐ Exercise #4 - After lifting all of your toes, keep your small toes lifted and extend only your big toe forward and down toward the floor
- ॐ Exercise #5 - Raise all of your toes again, and then extend only your little toes out and down to the floor.
- ॐ Exercise #6 - For the last exercise, keep your middle toes lifted and your toes spread, and extend only your big toes and little toes out and down toward the floor.

For the last exercises roll on some of your bunion oil, massage your feet and end with the yogi handshake (explained below).

- ॐ Exercise #7 = Yogi handshake with your toes

1 ounce castor oil : 60 drops of eos  
approx. 9 drops each essential oil in one  
ounce castor oil with two drops less basil  
and more chamomile, this looks like:

1 oz. castor oil

2 drops roman chamomile

7 marjoram

16 lavender

5 peppermint

12 cypress

9 juniper berry

9 basil

Roll on morning & night and massage in.

### Information to support the previous page: **How Bunions Develop**

A bunion (or prominent, bony bump) most often develops from a “zigzag” of the bones at the ball of the big toe: the big toe “zigs” in toward the other toes, while the metatarsal “zags” out, causing irritation and even calcification at the head of the metatarsal. This is usually accompanied by the collapse of the inner arch of the foot. Each problem amplifies the other: the collapse of the arch accelerates the formation of the bunion, while the bunion itself further diverts the metatarsals, undermining the arch. The bunion becomes a bigger problem when it becomes inflamed and sore from the pressure that you put on it as you walk.

Our genes determine the shape of the bones and the strength of the ligaments holding the foot together, so the cause is partly hereditary: the head of the metatarsal bone of the big toe can be unusually rounded or convex, which makes it more likely that the toe will slide on its surface to turn in. At the other end of the metatarsal, the cuneiform bone upon which it rests can be shaped in a way that causes the metatarsal to shift outward.

But heredity is not the only cause. Tight shoes—combined with a habit of walking with the feet turned out—waken the ligaments of the arch by putting pressure on the big toe metatarsal while forcing the big toe itself to turn inward by pushing it aside as you walk. As a result, the toes get bunched together as the adductor muscles in the sole of the foot (especially the adductor hallucis) become tight, pulling the big toe in toward the others. The progressive formation of the bunion goes largely unchecked because the abductor muscle (the abductor hallucis), which is designed to resist that pull and keep the big toe aligned, has become weak and overstretched.

Thus bunions—and muscular imbalances that encourage the formation of bunions —can cripple us by misaligning the big toe and weakening the structure of the foot. Let’s begin by looking at a muscle that plays a major supporting role in the power of the big toe, and then look at ways of realigning the big toe.

Activate Your Arches — see pic to the right.

The tibialis anterior runs from the base of the big toe through the forward part of the arch of the foot. One way to give this muscle a workout is to **practice picking up a napkin with your foot, scrunching up your toes to grab it.** You’ll feel a muscle activate at the base of your big toe as your ankle flexes and your foot inverts (i.e., flips sideways) to lift the napkin. That’s the tibialis anterior.

**You can also activate the tibialis anterior by lifting the big toe, keeping the mound of the toe grounded while**



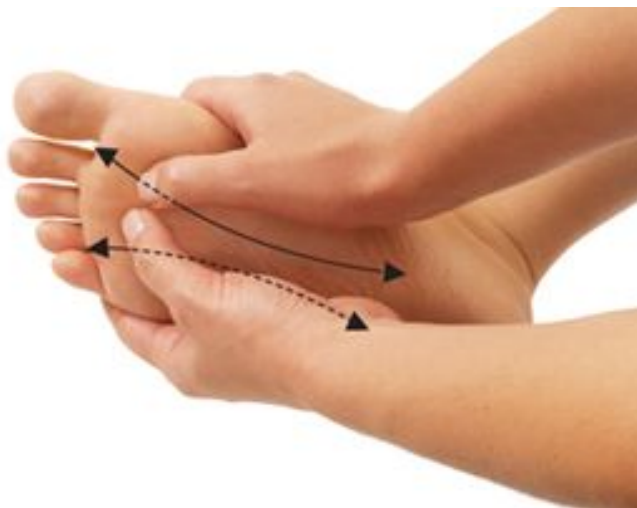
intentionally lifting the arch from behind the big toe mound.

### ॐ Exercise #1 Pick up things with your big toes ... Or throw a towel on the floor or napkin and scrunch it up with your toes.

The lift of the arch, without inverting the foot and keeping the ball of the toe grounded, comes from the tibialis anterior. You must keep this muscle activated and the ball of the big toe down to strengthen the muscles that realign the big toe. The following exercises help you accomplish this.

### Treat Yourself to a Foot Massage

Tightness in the sole of the foot contributes to the formation of bunions and causes the toes to be cramped. It's difficult, if not impossible, to strengthen the arch or work with the toes when they are stuck together in this way, so you should start with a foot massage to release the adductor muscles.



### ॐ Exercise #2 Roll a tennis ball or golf ball under your foot.

**You can use your thumbs or roll a tennis or golf ball beneath the mounds of the toes to release these muscles.** Start at the base of the big toes and massage down through the inner arch. Work back up along the little toe side of the foot, and anywhere else in the sole that feels tight.

Next you'll need to create some space between the toes so that they can regain their mobility. **Work your fingers as far between your toes as possible, cupping the sole of your foot in your palm, and working the toes back and forth with a "yoga handshake" to loosen them.**

### ॐ Exercise #3 = Yogi handshake with your toes

As you get used to this, you can increase the effectiveness of the stretch by alternating between an upward handshake (interlacing your fingers between your toes from the sole of the foot upward) and a downward handshake (interlacing the fingers from the top of the toes downward).



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To complete the warm-up, take each toe individually and gently pull it away from the heel. Although the purpose is not simply to “crack” the toe, a cracking or popping sound can signify a release.

ॐ **Exercise #4,5,6 - Lift all your toes and stretch your arch.**

ॐ **after lifting all of your toes, keep your small toes lifted and extend only your big toe forward and down toward the floor**

ॐ **raise all of your toes, and then extend only your little toes out and down to the floor.**

ॐ **For the last exercise, keep your middle toes lifted and your toes spread, and extend only your big toes and little toes out and down toward the floor.**



### **Strengthen Key Muscles**

**Next, sit on the floor or on a chair with your knees bent and your feet parallel. Lift all of your toes while keeping the balls of your toes and your inner heel grounded. See how much you can lift your arch, not just from the ball of the big toe, but also from the center of the sole in front of the heel.**

Of course, you may find that just lifting the toes can itself be a challenge. A sheath of fascia runs across the front of the ankle and acts like a kind of pulley for the toe extensor muscles—the muscles that run all the way up to the front of your shin and act to draw the toes toward the front of your shin. If the ankle is tight, the fascia can limit the movement of these extensor muscles, making it difficult to lift your toes. Poses such as vajrasana (thunderbolt pose) or virasana (hero pose) stretch this fascial sheath at the fronts of your ankles, freeing up these muscles and restoring mobility to the toes.

Once you get the toes moving, try this: **after lifting all of your toes, keep your small toes lifted and extend only your big toe forward and down toward the floor.** This action is your primary “workout” and the key to battling a bunion, provided that you:

- **Keep the lift of the arch.** This provides the resistance you need to strengthen the muscles along the instep of the foot. Ground your big toe mound and inner heel to keep the arch strong, and avoid simply inverting the foot.





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- **Reach out through the big toe**, as if you're trying to extend it forward to push a button as it comes down. This is quite different from just pressing the tip of your toe down into the floor, which just scrunches the toe. After lifting and extending your big toes several times, you're likely to feel the muscle that runs from your inner heel through the inner arch to your big toe (the abductor hallucis) begin to tire. That's your target muscle.
- To go further in strengthening your feet as a whole, **raise all of your toes**, and then extend only your little toes out and down to the floor.
  - This works the muscles running from the little toe along the outer shin and even along the outer thigh, strengthening the alignment on the little toe side of the foot, while building and stabilizing healthy arches. Weakness and tightness in this side of the foot and ankle often accompanies hyperextension of the knees, as well as pronation of the feet, or fallen arches. Strengthening your outer ankles and shins in this way helps your knees, particularly if you have flat feet.
- ॐ For the last exercise, keep your middle toes lifted and your toes spread, and extend only your big toes and little toes out and down toward the floor.
  - This builds the transverse arch at the front of the foot, as well as strongly working both the inner and outer edges of the foot, which energizes and balances the inner and outer arches

You might think of this last stage of the exercise as fully realigning the four corners of the foot—big toe mound, little toe mound, inner heel, and outer heel. When the heel bone and toes are properly aligned at these corners, your foot functions well in forward-moving actions such as walking, just as a car drives best when its wheels are properly aligned.

These toe exercises can be incorporated into many yoga poses to enhance your overall alignment and increase both the resilience of your arches and the strength of the foundation in your feet, with additional benefits for your knees and hips. If you have bunions, these exercises will help you slow or even halt their progress. And even if you don't have bunions, these actions will help you to fully engage all the way from your feet through your knees and hips, enhancing the overall health of these joints.

**These notes do not include the part on the standing poses, those would be good to add if I use this with any yogis.**