

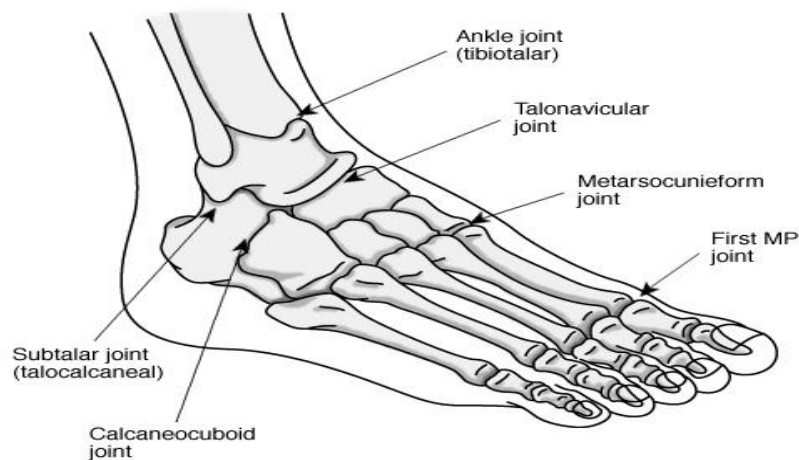
Arthritis of the Foot and Ankle

There are more than 100 different types of arthritis. But when most people talk about arthritis, they are usually referring to the most common form, **osteoarthritis** ("osteo" means bone). Osteoarthritis develops as we age and is often called "wear-and-tear" arthritis. Over the years, the thin covering (cartilage) on the ends of bones becomes worn and frayed. This results in inflammation, swelling, and pain in the joint.

An injury to a joint, even if treated properly, can cause osteoarthritis to develop in the future. This is often referred to as traumatic arthritis. It may develop months or years after a severe sprain, torn ligament or broken bone. There are 28 bones and over 30 joints in the foot. Any of these joints can be affected by arthritis.

Signs and symptoms

Signs and symptoms of arthritis of the foot vary, depending on which joint is affected. Common symptoms include pain or tenderness, stiffness or reduced motion, and swelling. Walking may be difficult.



Treating your arthritis

Depending on the type, location and severity of your arthritis, there are many types of treatment available. Nonsurgical treatment options include:

- Taking pain relievers and anti-inflammatory medication to reduce swelling
- Putting a pad, arch support or other type of insert in your shoe
- Wearing a custom-made shoe or using a brace
- Participating in a program of physical therapy and exercises Controlling your weight or taking nutritional supplements
- Getting a dose of steroid medication injected into the joint

If your arthritis doesn't respond to such conservative treatments, surgical options are available. The type of surgery that's best for you will depend on the type of arthritis you have, the impact of the disease on your joints, and the location of the arthritis.