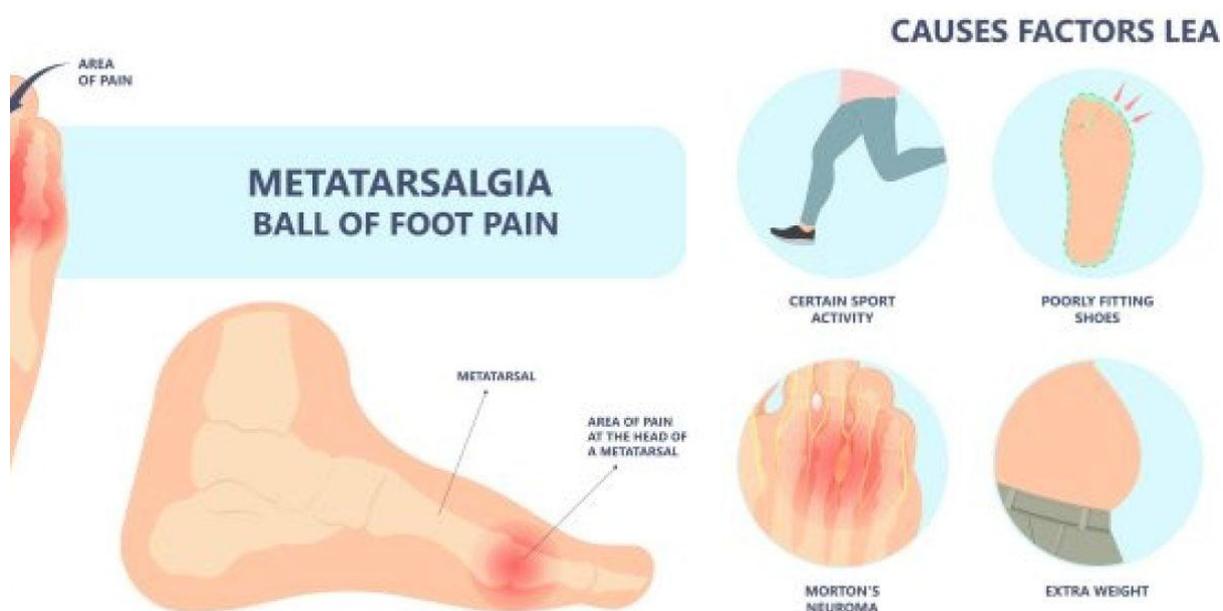


## Pain in the Ball of the Foot



### What is Pain in the Ball of the Foot?

Pain in the ball of the foot (the area just behind the toes) is often caused by pressure, overuse, or inflammation of the tissues. It can affect daily activities such as walking, running, or standing.

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## Common Causes

- **Metatarsalgia** – pain and inflammation in the ball of the foot
  - **Bunions or toe deformities** – pressure on the forefoot
  - **Morton’s neuroma** – thickening of tissue around nerves between toes
  - **Stress fractures** – small cracks in the metatarsal bones
  - **Poor footwear** – high heels, tight shoes, or shoes with insufficient cushioning
  - **Overuse injuries** – from running or high-impact activities
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## Who Gets It?

- Runners and athletes
  - People who **stand or walk for long periods**
  - Individuals with **high arches, flat feet, or toe deformities**
  - Those wearing **tight, narrow, or high-heeled shoes**
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## Symptoms

- Pain in the ball of the foot, especially when **standing, walking, or running**
  - Tingling, numbness, or burning sensations
  - Swelling or bruising in the forefoot
  - Pain that worsens when wearing certain shoes
  - Feeling of **walking on a pebble or lump** in the foot
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## Self-Care & Home Management

- **Rest** – reduce activities that worsen pain
- **Ice therapy** – 10–15 minutes, 2–3 times daily
- **Footwear** – wear supportive shoes with wide toe boxes and cushioning
- **Foot pads or metatarsal supports** – reduce pressure on the forefoot
- **Stretching exercises** – calf stretches, plantar fascia stretches
- **Pain relief** – paracetamol or NSAIDs if safe for you

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## Exercises

1. **Toe and Forefoot Stretch:** Sit, cross affected foot over other knee, gently pull toes back toward shin, hold 15–30 seconds, repeat 3 times
2. **Calf Stretch:** Lean against a wall with back leg straight, heel on the ground, hold 20–30 seconds
3. **Foot Strengthening:** Towel scrunches or marble pick-ups with toes

A physiotherapist can provide **specific exercises tailored to your condition.**

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## When to See a Physiotherapist or Doctor

- Pain **does not improve** after 1–2 weeks of self-care
  - Persistent swelling, bruising, or deformity
  - Difficulty walking or performing daily activities
  - Tingling, numbness, or burning sensations
  - Suspected **stress fracture or nerve problem**
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## Treatment Physiotherapists May Offer

- Hands-on treatment: **massage, mobilization, stretching**
  - **Exercise program** for strength and flexibility
  - Advice on **footwear, orthotics, and activity modification**
  - Taping or pads to **support and reduce pressure**
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## Prognosis

Most pain in the ball of the foot improves with **conservative care** within a few weeks to months. Early treatment and proper footwear reduce the risk of **chronic pain or deformity.**

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## References

- NHS – Foot Pain: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/foot-pain](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/foot-pain)

- Chartered Society of Physiotherapy – Foot & Ankle Guidance