

Footwear

- Avoid high heels & shoes that are too tight!
- You should have a snug heel, that does not allow much rocking of your foot during walking.
- Work with your physician to find footwear that allows your foot to maintain a neutral angle at the ankle.
- Orthotics should be taken to the shoe store when you are trying on new shoes to assure a good fit.
- If you were diagnosed with a Morton's foot (longer 2nd toe than 1st toe), then a pad to support your big toe should be used.

Sports

- If your discomfort began after excessive jogging or a particular sporting activity, then this activity should be avoided until you are pain free.
- Sports that do not often cause this type of pain include: rowing, swimming &/or cycling.

Exercise

Do not begin any of the following exercises until you are free of your pain. Also, always stretch before & after the exercises

- Walk in a swimming pool & take long strides. The decreased gravity effect of the water decreases the stress on these muscles in walking.
- Spend 5-15 minutes a day picking things up with your toes. Start with light objects like Kleenex & then move on as your toe strength & dexterity increase. The divine power would not have given us toes if s/he didn't mean for us to use them.
- When you feel up to it, walking on a wet, sandy beach with special attention to toe-off will allow your muscles to strengthen & your spirit as well by the power of the seas. Once mastered, the next step is walking along dry, sandy beaches. Take long strides at a comfortable pace.

Sit in a chair with one leg crossed over the other & grasp your toes pulling them back towards you (figure A & close-up in figure B). Gently push your toes into your fingers for 15 seconds. Relax your push & see if your toes extend further. Repeat this exercise 3 times and then 3 times a day.

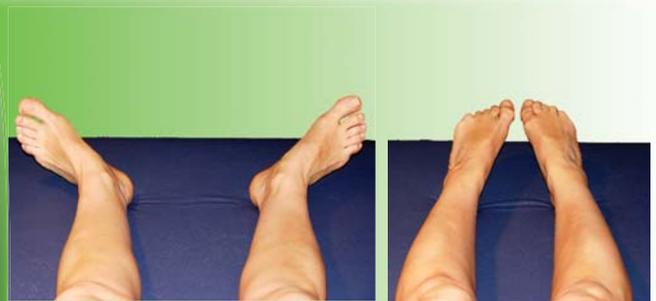
This stretch can also be performed in a nice warm bath or hot tub to maximize the stretch!



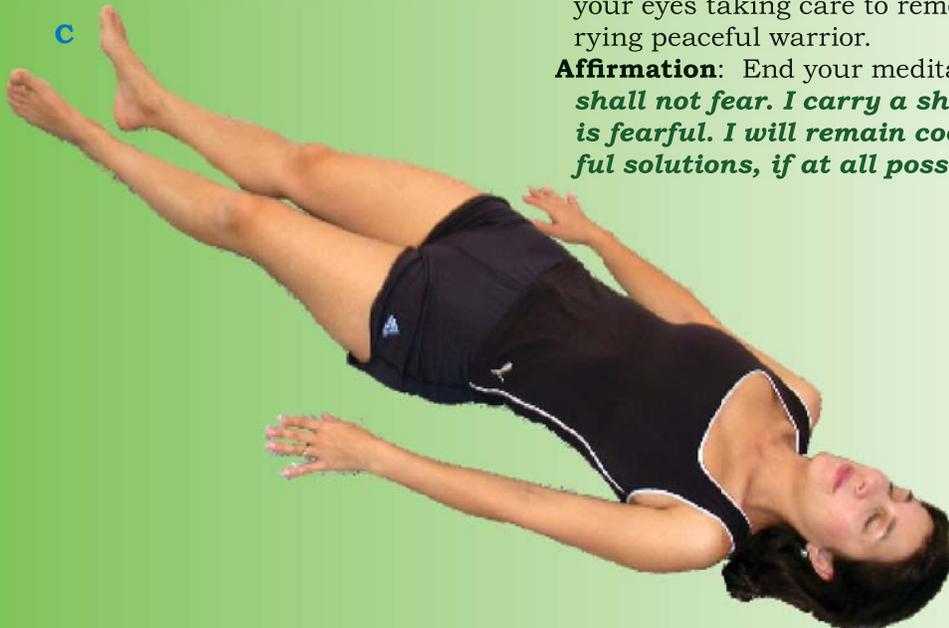
In the seated position you can use a golf ball, roller pin or foot massage device to apply a deep pressure to a sore spot. Simply roll the object around the bottom of your foot looking for areas of discomfort. Once found allow your foot to dwell there with pressure on it to the feather's edge of discomfort. As the discomfort goes away allow yourself to increase the pressure until your full weight is on it & you no longer experience the discomfort. Repeat this exercise 1-3 times a day until you no longer have foot discomfort.



A Dr. Scholl's foot pad can be cut-out so that the prominence beneath your second toe is not supported & a felt pad or 2 can be used beneath your big toe to even out the area (see figure). This can be inserted in your shoe, but will require you to add pads or replace them as they become worn. You can also have a shoe-repairman alter the soles of your shoe to make a more permanent change.



This is a 2-fer. Curl your toes, point your feet & turn them in (figure A). Hold this position for 5 seconds & then spread your toes out, turn your feet out & bring your toes towards your head for 5 seconds. Then, relax & repeat this exercise 5-10 times at a sitting. Repeat the whole thing 2-3 times a day.



Position: Either seated comfortably in a high back chair (figure A), seated in the lotus position (figure B) or laying flat on the floor (figure C)...really any position that is comfortable for you to be in.

The Breath: Breath deeply in and out through your nose with your tongue resting comfortably on the roof of your mouth. If you place a hand below your belly button and one on your chest they should be rising and falling together.

The Mindset: As you sit or lay there focusing on your breathing imagine that you are in a grassy field. The sun is shining & the birds are chirping. This is no ordinary grassy field as you are sitting beneath a tree on a soft mossy, stump overlooking a medieval jousting tournament. You watch as one knight in silver armor defeats all of his foes. On the knight's shield is a symbol engraved in it of a stately lion. Every blow that comes toward the knight is deflected away by this stately, lion engraved shield. After defeating all challenges the knight is alone triumphant in the field.

The two of you remain there for a moment surrounded by peace & calm. The knight walks toward you; his sword sheathed & presents you with this stately lion engraved shield. You receive it graciously & the knight disappears into the forest. You look carefully at the silver, almost mirror-like, shield. The shield is surprisingly light weighted & your arm slides into a forearm strap & hand sheath on its other side, as if it was tailored for you. You admire & trace with your finger along the engraving of the lion. The face on the lion is calm & reassuring.

Imagine now that you are faced with something that you find strikes fear into your very soul. It may be a situation that you have been in before or one that you just think to be scary. However, this time you are equipped with a powerful deflecting shield with a stately lion engraved upon it. Know that nothing can penetrate your shield & that it will always be there. Take 3 deep breaths & open your eyes taking care to remember you are a shield carrying peaceful warrior.

Affirmation: End your meditation by telling yourself: ***"I shall not fear. I carry a shield that deflects all that is fearful. I will remain cool-headed & create peaceful solutions, if at all possible."***