Treatment of Hammertoe Deformity, by Dr. Andrew Carver

A bend at the middle of a toe joint causes the deformity known as hammertoe. This condition usually results from wearing high heels or shoes that are too tight. Improper footwear forces a toe against the front of the shoe, thereby causing an unnatural bend or “hammer-like” appearance. Other causes of hammertoe include a toe injury, diabetes, arthritis, and other health conditions that affect muscles and nerves.

Patients with [hammertoe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hammer_toe%E2%80%8E) often develop corns and calluses, and they report pain when walking. In order to relieve the pressure and pain of hammertoe, a patient may need to change their footwear and be fitted with shoe inserts or pads, which help to reposition the toe. In more severe cases of hammertoe, a physician may advise surgery. In cases where a patient’s toe shows some flexibility, a podiatrist may straighten it through an incision in the toe to release a tendon. If the patient’s toe shows rigidity, then the physician may align tendons as well as remove pieces of the bone with temporary pins inserted to straighten the toe.

In the past decade, the field of podiatry has experienced many technological advances in the treatment of hammertoe. I co-invented the Weil-Carver™ Hammertoe Implant, which incorporates an absorbable pin to hold bones together for fusion techniques. This breakthrough eliminated the need for the patient to endure a long metal wire extending from the toe for a six-week period following surgery. The traditional technique often caused discomfort and infections. Once placed inside the toe, the Weil-Carver™ Hammertoe Implant melts into water and sugar within a 12-week period!

For more information about my podiatry care, visit www.drandrewcarver.com

About the author: With over 35 years of experience in podiatric medicine, Andrew Carver, DPM, currently practices at the Washington, D.C. Shock Wave Center & the Washington, D.C. Laser Nail Center. Prior to his move to the nation’s capital in 2009, Dr. Carver practiced sports medicine in San Francisco, serving as the Podiatrist for the Golden State Warriors and other professional sports teams.