



## Stress Fractures of the Foot and Ankle



### Overview

Stress fractures are one or more tiny cracks in a bone. These fractures are common in the legs and feet. That's because your legs and feet have to support your weight and absorb the forces of walking, running and jumping.

### Causes

Stress fractures can happen if you suddenly increase a high-impact activity. Walking or running for a much longer distance than you normally do can cause it. You can develop stress fractures if you switch from a soft surface to a hard or uneven one. It can happen if you don't wear the proper shoes, or if you have poor training techniques. Your risk is higher if you have weak bones because of a medical condition or because of a medication you take.

### Symptoms

Stress fractures cause pain and tenderness. It hurts more when you're active, and it feels better when you rest. You may also have swelling and bruising.

### Treatment

Treatment options include rest, medications, and shoes that protect your feet. You may benefit from a cast that immobilizes your foot while it heals. If these aren't helpful, you may need surgery. Your healthcare provider can create a plan that's right for you.

