

FOOT CLAIM IN ONE PAGE

FOOT CLAIMS

GAIT AND LOAD FILE

Foot diagnoses use different diagnostic codes. Identify the exact condition, the service path, both sides, and the code-specific findings.

01 Build the foot claim correctly

01 IDENTIFY THE CONDITION

Distinguish flatfoot, plantar fasciitis, hallux valgus, pes cavus, metatarsal disease, and injury residuals.

02 CHOOSE THE SERVICE PATH

Show direct onset, secondary causation, secondary aggravation, or aggravation of a condition noted at entry.

03 MATCH THE CODE

Use the diagnostic code for the diagnosed condition. Do not treat every painful foot as an other foot injury.

04 DOCUMENT LATERALITY

Specify right, left, or bilateral involvement and separate symptoms when the schedule requires it.

02 Condition-specific rating routes

FLATFOOT 5276

Document deformity, pain on manipulation and use, swelling, callosities, pronation, tenderness, and response to appliances.

PLANTAR FASCIITIS 5269

Document treatment history, relief, loss of use, and unilateral or bilateral involvement.

PES CAVUS 5278

Record dorsiflexion, toe position, fascia, callosities, deformity, and tenderness.

OTHER CODES

Hallux valgus, metatarsalgia, malunion, nonunion, and injury residuals each have separate criteria.

03 Build one connected evidence record

1 PODIATRY DIAGNOSIS

Use examinations, imaging, gait findings, surgical reports, and orthotic history.

2 ENTRANCE AND SERVICE RECORDS

Determine whether the condition was noted at entry and whether aggravation is at issue.

3 TREATMENT RESPONSE

Document orthotics, shoes, injections, therapy, surgery, and whether relief occurred.

4 GAIT AND LOAD EFFECTS

Describe standing, walking, push-off, balance, callosities, and altered mechanics.

5 SECONDARY CHAIN

When another disability changes gait or loading, explain the medical mechanism and chronology.

THE RECORD SHOULD EXPLAIN

Why these facts support this veteran's claim

- What evidence was reviewed
- When the condition and limitations began
- Which legal or medical pathway applies
- How competing explanations were addressed

Do not use DC 5284 to bypass a diagnostic code that specifically addresses the diagnosed foot condition. Avoid duplicate ratings for the same manifestations.

04 Rating questions to preserve

DIAGNOSIS

Which named foot code applies?

SIDE

Is the condition unilateral or bilateral?

SEVERITY

Which exact findings match the code language?

FUNCTION

What additional loss occurs with pain, use, repeated activity, and flare-ups?

05 Before you file

✓ Exact foot diagnosis identified

✓ Entrance findings reviewed

✓ Correct diagnostic code selected

✓ Gait and functional loss described

✓ Right and left sides distinguished

✓ Service path documented

✓ Orthotic response recorded

✓ Secondary chain medically explained

