



# HEALTHY FEET

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## How Your Feet Change

Our feet are an extremely important and hard-working part of our bodies. They take a lot of pressure, and do the important job of transporting us from one place to another every single day of our lives.

There are changes to the feet in the different life stages. Here are some of those life stages and what happens during each of them.

### As a Newborn

When a baby is born, their feet have no fully-formed bones. As strange as it sounds, the bones in their feet are all soft and very pliable. The bones are cushioned by something often referred to as "puppy fat". This is fat that generally wears off by adolescence, though on the foot it begins to wear off around the preschool years. Even as a young baby, it is important to allow a child's feet to grow properly, without unhealthily restrictive shoes.

### The Growing Child

When a child begins to stand up, what was once more like cartilage will begin to turn into bony tissue. As the child learns to stand and then walk, there are still large gaps in between the bones in their feet that can be malformed if not taken care of properly.

A young child's foot will be growing quickly, and it is important to focus on good nutrition so that the bones receive all the important vitamins and minerals that they need to grow in a healthy manner. During the age of 2-4, they will have more bones in their foot than they will at any other time, because the bones will eventually grow together before they reach adulthood.

## **Adulthood**

As an adult, you would assume that your foot has finally stopped growing. Our feet tend to spread with age, however. Our ligaments and tendons get a little more slack as the years go by, and this causes our feet to become flatter, wider and longer. Weight gain can add additional pressure to the foot and ankles, causing your gait to be modified.

## **Pregnancy**

Pregnancy is a time of life when everything about your body changes, and that includes your feet. They will swell due to fluid and tissue that accumulates in your lower extremities.

Instability during walking is caused by lax foot and ankle joints. Even when you have lost the swelling, the extra weight carried around during your pregnancy can permanently flatten your foot and make it bigger.

## **The Elderly**

In old age, the feet continue to change. Your feet will lose the fatty pads on the bottom of them, which makes you more prone to injury. This can be minimized by wearing shoes that are properly cushioned and padded.

Corns, calluses and hammertoes can be caused by the long-term damage of wearing high heels. Ligaments get longer and tendons tighten, leaving you vulnerable to tears and sprains. Staying active and taking care of your overall health can go a long way in preventing many of the feet problems that are generally related to old age.

Our feet are constantly on the move. In addition to that, they are forever changing and transforming to serve us in the best way possible.

## Tips for Healthy Feet

Maybe the summer and sandal weather is approaching, or perhaps it is winter but you simply want pretty feet. Whatever the case, taking care of your feet is an affordable way to make you feel luxurious. Here are some ideas on how to make your feet feel and look great.

### 1. Daily Care

Instead of neglecting your feet until they look completely uncared for, make foot care a daily habit that becomes a normal part of your routine. When you have a shower or bath each day, use a foot file or callus remover to keep them smooth. Apply a natural lotion each night before bed and put on a pair of socks to seal in the moisture.

### 2. Have a Soak

When you have the time, fill a large bowl specifically dedicated to foot care with very warm water, Epsom salts and essential oils. Sit back with a book and some soft music, and soak away the stress. Your feet will absorb the essential oils and the Epsom salts will help you to relax as they soften your feet.

### 3. Don't Forget the Nails

Toenails are a big part of the overall look of your feet. Keep your toenails painted with a fresh, stylish color. The great thing is that toenail polish generally lasts much longer than fingernail polish, due to less wear and tear on it. When your toenail polish begins looking shabby, simply clean it off and reapply with another fresh color.

#### **4. Get an Occasional Professional Pedicure**

Although you can care for your feet affordably at home, it is a nice treat to occasionally splurge on a professional pedicure. Someone who makes a career of caring for feet has all the special instruments that the average individual will not have access to. If you go once every few months, or even twice a year, you can easily keep your feet up at home in between visits.

#### **5. Wear Proper Shoes**

A big part of foot care involves wearing the proper footwear that will give your feet the support that they need. Choosing the right pair of shoes can be a challenge. Take a little extra time and find a store that has a knowledgeable sales rep who can assist you as you search for the proper pair.

Remember, it is worth it to put out a little extra money in order to find a good quality pair of shoes that will last you longer, and help your foot health, posture and even back health.

#### **6. Foods for Foot Health**

Believe it or not, the food you eat can help maintain the health of your hard-working feet. Eating a wholesome diet with a variety of nutrients will ensure that your feet can serve you well for many more years to come.

Your diet should include foods with calcium to build strong bones, as well as lean protein to strengthen the muscles that take so much wear and tear during a lifetime. A variety of antioxidants will help the skin on your feet to remain healthy and supple, vitamin C is used in your tendons and ligaments, and collagen makes your toenails strong.

Caring for your feet doesn't have to be a complicated or expensive ordeal. It is as simple as a few lifestyle changes, and creating some daily habits. Use these tips to ensure that you will have a great pair of feet to last you a lifetime.



## **What Your Feet Are Telling You**

The human body is amazing. Every part works together, and each part has signs that can let you know if your health is on track or not. The feet are no exception. Here are some things that your feet may be trying to tell you about your health.

### **Cold Toes**

Many people have chilly toes, and difficulty keeping them warm no matter how many socks they wear. Cold toes can be a sign of poor circulation. They can also

be a signal of diabetes, high blood pressure or heart disease, so if your cold toes persist, check with your doctor for possible underlying issues.

## **Cramps**

Foot cramps and spasms are commonly caused when you have been on your feet too much. They can also be caused by a lack or imbalance of vitamins and minerals, ranging from vitamin D, calcium, potassium and magnesium. If foot cramps are common for you, check your diet to see whether it may be lacking in some area.

## **Swelling**

Swelling of the feet commonly occurs when you have been on your feet all day. It is fairly common, and generally nothing to be concerned about. There are other times when there is something else going on, however. Blood clots and issues with the lymphatic system can cause swelling, so see your doctor if swelling persists with no reasonable explanation.

## **Itching**

Itchy feet can be caused by athlete's foot, which is a fungal infection that manifests in itching as well as scaly skin of the foot. If this is the case, you may need to get a prescription from the doctor. In the absence of any other health complications, you can also treat it vigilantly at home.

Itchy feet along with dryness and red coloring can indicate contact dermatitis, which is caused by a reaction to lotions or other sensitivities you may have.



## **Malformed Toes and Nails**

The shape of your toes and nails may be letting you know something. Being low in iron or being exposed to certain chemicals can cause your toenails to appear spoon-shaped. Clubbed toes can be caused by a variety of infections, and even lung disease. Tight shoes and nerve damage through various means can cause claw toe, which makes your toes extend upward, then down from the middle joint.

## **Sores That Will Not Heal**

If your feet have sores on the bottom that will not heal, this could indicate diabetes. The high blood sugar of diabetics causes nerve damage, and this means that someone can be unaware of a cut they get, or one they have had for a long time. Because this can lead to serious infections, and because diabetes has a wide range of serious side effects (if it is indeed the cause of the slow-healing sore), it is important to see a doctor immediately if this is suspected.

Our feet are great at alerting us to issues, diseases, and imbalances in our systems. If you have anything unusual happening in regards to your feet, look further into it. Sometimes there's a simple solution, and other times it is more complex. Either way, listen to what your feet are saying.

## **The Rules of Shoe Shopping**

Some people love shoe shopping, and some hate it. No matter what your take on it is, there are some basic rules that can make or break your experience. Here are the do's and don'ts that you can follow to make your shoe shopping trip a great success.

### **Don't Purchase Shoes for One Outfit**

You've bought a bold new outfit, and you want a pair of equally dramatic shoes to match it. But think twice before you buy any pair of shoes for only one outfit. There are special occasions where breaking this rule is understandable, but in a normal situation every pair of shoes you buy should go with at least a few outfits in your closet... the more the better.

### **Resist the Urge to Buy Shoe Clones**

We all have a favorite color and style. Most of us can take one glance in our closets, both clothing and shoes, and know what that color and style is. Perhaps you have 30 blue shirts, or far too many tank tops.

Shoes, like all clothing, happen to be something that piles up in multiples as well. Keep this in mind as you shop. If you don't have a specific reason for shoe shopping, you will probably find yourself gravitating to almost exactly the same pair of shoes over and over. Keep a mental list of the shoes you own, or even take a photo on your smartphone to remind you of what shoes you do not need any more of.

### **Purchase Shoes in the Afternoon or Evening**

In the morning, your feet have hopefully had a good night's rest and are at their best. This is not a realistic time to shop, because you need your shoes to fit you all day. Do your shoe shopping in the afternoon or evening when your feet are slightly swollen, so that you will not end up with a pair that are too tight when you are actually using them.

## **Try More Than One Size**

When picking out a shoe to try on, don't insist on trying only the "right" size. If you normally wear a size 9, try a size 9 as well as half a size up and half a size down. There can be variations with different brands, different styles, and even identical shoes. Go with whatever fits you best, size aside.

## **Quality over Quantity**

It is fun to purchase shoes, and it is easy to get carried away. Try to curb any tendencies you may have towards buying shoes for fun, or because they are on sale.

When you buy shoes, look for the best quality within your price range. High quality shoes are an investment in your health, because your foot health affects your life in so many ways. From preventing pain, to maintaining good posture, healthy feet contribute to your quality of life. Maximize this knowledge by putting out the extra money to keep them in tip-top shape.

Shoe shopping is both loved and hated by many. It would do every individual a world of good to know the basic rules of shoe shopping and adhere to them. Put these tips into practice and enjoy your next shoe shopping trip.

## **Treat Yourself to a Foot Spa at Home**

A foot spa is a great way to relax and unwind after a stressful day or week. Many spas include foot spa treatments, but they can be expensive. Also, some people simply prefer to be in their own home while relaxing. How can you create your own foot spa and give yourself the treat you deserve?

## **Get the Supplies**

The supplies you use are an important part of the whole experience of your home foot spa. There are many products on the market, but it is a good idea to use care when making decisions and purchase them from a reputable company that is clear about the purity of their ingredients. Instead of purchasing whatever is cheapest, look for products with quality ingredients that will enrich the health of your feet and skin.

For a foot spa, first gather items such as a bowl large enough for the foot bath, a foot file, several towels and toenail clippers. You may also want Epsom salts and essential oils for the foot bath, along with lotion and nail polish.

## **Create the Right Atmosphere**

Although you don't need a special room for your foot spa, it will make the experience even more special if you set a peaceful atmosphere. Dim the lights in the bathroom and light some candles. The reason you will likely want to use your bathroom is because any water spills will be easy to clean up.

Select your favorite music, and choose a kind that helps any stress to disappear. Instead of trying to enjoy your foot spa when the rest of the house is running wild, wait until the kids are in bed or when you are home alone with no interruptions. Brew yourself an herbal tea to enjoy.

## **Steps to the Spa**

If you have old nail polish on that you would like to change, remove it with nail polish remover and then clip your toenails. Next, fill up the large bowl with water as hot as you are comfortable with. It will cool quickly, so don't leave it sitting around too long. Set a large towel underneath the bowl to catch any spills.

Add the Epsom salts, and a few drops of your favorite essential oil or oils to the water, along with a few drops of natural liquid soap. Sit down and soak your feet until the water begins to get cool. If you would like to sit longer, simply drain some water and refill the bowl to the top with hot water again.

Scrub your feet with the pumice stick or foot file. Use the various tools to clean up your nails and cuticles. Dry your feet off with a fresh towel and then massage lotion into your feet. Wipe any extra lotion off of your toes and apply polish to the nails.

A foot spa is one of the simple luxuries that can melt the stress of life away. Take some time and pamper yourself with this special treat. With the right tools and a little bit of extra time, you can create the beautiful and relaxing foot spa that you deserve to enjoy.



## **Facts About Athlete's Foot**

Athlete's foot is a painful and embarrassing condition that is easily spread. It is difficult to avoid, and even more difficult to get rid of once you have it. Here are some facts about athlete's foot in order to help you deal with this troublesome issue.

### **What Exactly Is Athlete's Foot?**

Athlete's foot is a fungal infection of the foot. It is quite common, and it manifests on the skin of the foot it has infected. Scaling, itching and a red appearance are some of its symptoms. The entire foot can be infected, but in between the toes is an area that is especially prone to it.

### **How Is It Spread?**

Athlete's foot is transmitted by being exposed to the fungus through contact with infected skin, as well as coming into contact with traces of the fungus that may be on surfaces you touch.

Swimming pools and their locker rooms are notorious for the spread of athlete's foot, and it is well known that being in this environment makes you susceptible to it. Contaminated items such as towels and clothing harbour the bacteria, and allow a perfect environment for it to spread to many individuals.

### **What Are the Symptoms?**

The signs that you may have athlete's foot include scaly, itchy red feet and lesions. Itchy blisters on the soles of the feet can also be a sign. Pain can be another symptom. If you are experiencing any of these, it is best to check it out thoroughly and confirm a diagnosis.

## **How Can You Get Rid of It?**

If your athlete's foot is getting out of control, you can go to the doctor for treatment. If you want to try to cure it at home, there are many remedies that a number of people swear by. One of them is using apple cider vinegar. Simply soak your feet in apple cider vinegar 10-30 minutes at least twice a day until the athlete's foot clears up.

Tea tree oil is another popular remedy for athlete's foot, and you can either soak your feet in a foot bath along with a few drops of the tea tree oil, or apply it directly to the athlete's foot. You can apply a few drops directly to the skin of a small infected area, or else mix it in with organic virgin coconut oil and make it go further. The coconut oil has antifungal properties as well, which gives extra help to the remedy.

## **How Can You Prevent It?**

Athlete's foot thrives in moist, warm places. Because it is often spread in locker rooms and swimming pools, you can help prevent this unsightly condition by wearing flip flops when in either of these places. Always be sure to thoroughly dry your feet, especially in between toes after a bath or swimming.

Change your socks and shoes frequently and keep them clean and dry in between uses. As they say, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Athlete's foot is no fun, and it is not an issue that is limited to athletes. No matter who you are, you are at risk for contracting this condition that can be hard to get rid of. Empower yourself with knowledge and get rid of athlete's foot once and for all.

## **Do Bunions Need to Be Treated?**

Bunions are hard bumps on the joint of the big toe's base. They are often caused by your big toe pushing against the next toe. Bunions can be caused by various medical conditions, structural defects, tight shoes or other stress on the foot. Here is how to assess whether your bunions need to be treated or not.

### **What Does Medical Treatment Involve?**

When someone chooses to treat their bunions, it is generally recommended as a last resort - when either the pain is too great to bear or it is interfering with an individual's daily activities. Surgical options can include several methods, including removing bone, removing tissue, and realignment of bones. Recovery can take months, and surgery will likely interfere with a large time period of your life.

### **Shoe Inserts**

Arch support and shoe inserts are one way of dealing naturally with bunions. It doesn't take away the problem, but it minimizes the pain and discomfort. Inserts help to distribute weight more evenly and take the pressure off, allowing the bunion to keep from getting worse. There are over-the-counter arch supports available, as well as prescription orthotics.

### **Apply Ice**

Ice is one of the most simple remedies you will find. Use it after you have been on your feet all day. It will reduce swelling and pain, minimizing the effects of the bunions.



## **Wear Proper Shoes**

The value of a good quality pair of shoes cannot be underestimated. If you are plagued by bunions, throw away your stilettos, or at least cut down on your use of them. Wear shoes with a proper arch, and consider investing in a high quality, custom fitted pair of shoes for everyday use. Save the others for special occasions.

## **Maintain a Healthy Weight**

If you have bunions bothering you, take a look at your overall health. If you are overweight or obese, consider losing weight in order to take the pressure off your feet. Bunions are aggravated if you are overweight. Maintaining a healthy weight, and losing weight if necessary, can be one of the best ways to curb the destruction your bunions are causing you.

## **Massage**

If you already see a massage therapist regularly, mention your bunions on your next visit. A professional massage therapist may be able to help reduce pain and swelling in the area. If you are trying to save money, or want something that can be done more often in between massage therapy visits, there are techniques you can use at home. Many websites and videos are available with ideas on how to massage bunions on your own if necessary.

## **When to Pursue Further Treatment**

If you have used natural remedies and tried various ways to stop your bunions from becoming worse, take note of whether it is helping or not. Generally, doctors recommend medical treatment if your bunions have caused you pain for

over one year. If this is the case, speak to your doctor about surgical options and other possibilities.

Bunions are a real pain to live with. Try the treatments above and use as many as needed on a regular basis to control the effects of the bunions you are dealing with. You will soon know whether or not you are a candidate to consider taking a further step in the treatment of your bunions. Keeping bunions at bay is an investment in your future comfort.

## **How Treat with Corns and Calluses**

Corns and calluses are relatively common foot conditions. When your foot is faced with friction or pressure, it has a defence mechanism that creates thick and hardened layers of skin as a protective measure. Anyone can get corns and calluses, but you can be especially prone to them due to certain conditions. Find out how you can deal with any of these pesky intruders that may come your way.

### **What You Need to Know**

If you have an underlying health condition that is causing your corns or calluses, seek treatment from a medical doctor before attempting to clear up the problem on your own at home. Conditions in this category may include diabetes, or other illnesses that cause poor blood flow to your feet. But if you are healthy and free of medical conditions that would cause complications, go ahead and try the following remedies.

### **Foot Soak and Pumice Stone**

You can attend to your feet regularly by setting up your own home foot spa. Soak your feet in hot water and soap until the skin is soft. You can add apple cider

vinegar or Epsom salts if you wish. Next, use a pumice stone or foot file to rub the extra skin off.

When you are done, use plenty of lotion to soften the skin even more. You will not likely deal with the problem in one sitting. Rather, you can minimize the corns and calluses over a period of time with regular and special attention to the area.

### **Vitamin E and A**

This is a great remedy for corns. Both of these important vitamins can be found in capsule form. Whichever one you use, simply squeeze open the capsule and apply to the corn, and then cover your feet with socks for the night. If you repeat this every night, your corns should disappear within time.

### **Baking Soda**

There are a few ways you can use baking soda in the fight against both corns and calluses. The first way is to mix just enough water with baking soda to make a paste, then apply it to the corns or calluses and rub it into the area. You can also add 3 tablespoons of baking soda to a warm foot bath and let your feet soak for as long as you like.

### **Vinegar**

A small amount of vinegar can be poured onto a cotton ball and then taped onto the area you wish to heal. You can use a Band-Aid to fasten the cotton ball in place if you have no other adhesive tape. Leave this remedy on overnight and remove it in the morning, then gently massage the area with a pumice stone.

Corns and calluses are an irritation that are unsightly and can even be painful. If you are in good health, there is no need to have them treated by your doctor. There are several remedies to choose from, and chances are that you may have

many of them in your home already. Pick a few that are easily available to you and give it a try. In no time, you will have beautiful, pain-free feet.



## What Are Verrucas and How to Treat

A verruca, also known as a plantar wart, is a wart that can be found on the sole of a person's foot. Verrucas are relatively common, but can still be an embarrassing affliction due to their stigma. It is similar to a regular wart, but because it is on the bottom of the foot, it may cause pain when standing or walking.

Here is a little more information about plantar warts, along with some ways you can get rid of them once and for all.

## **What Causes Verrucas?**

Verrucas, or plantar warts, is a viral infection that manifests as a benign epithelial tumor. They are caused by the human papillomavirus, and can be found both alone and in clusters. Verrucas are extremely contagious; therefore you must be cautious to avoid them and to treat them immediately upon discovery. They can be passed by direct contact, and also through contact with surfaces that have been contaminated.

## **Essential Oils**

There are a few essential oils that can help you get rid of verrucas. Try using either lemon or tea tree oil as they have been tested for this purpose. One of the best ways to use either oil is to simply apply a drop of the oil directly to the verruca, three times each day. If you wish, you can put a bandage directly over where you put the drop of essential oil in order to hold it in place.

## **Apple Cider Vinegar**

Apple cider vinegar works in two different ways to destroy verrucas. First, it irritates the area where the verruca is, and causes the immune system to prioritize healing in that particular area. Second, it causes the area to fight the verruca and make it an environment that the verruca cannot thrive or survive in.

## **Zinc**

Taken internally, zinc will build your immune system and help you to fight verrucas from the inside out. Zinc will build your immune system in general, which will also help you avoid getting another infection in the future. If you wish, you can also use the liquid form of zinc and apply it directly to the verruca.

## **How to Avoid Them**

Although they can often be treated at home, it is best to avoid getting a verruca in the first place. In order to avoid them, you must be vigilant about hygiene. When you are in a public shower or locker room, wear a pair of flip flops to avoid coming in contact with contamination on the floor and other surfaces.

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water when you have been out in public. If you have a verruca, don't pick at it and then touch other body parts or objects.

Verrucas are something no one wants to get. If you have one, you may panic and wonder how long it will take to get rid of. By following these tips, you can say goodbye to your verrucas once and for all.

## **Common Toenail Issues**

Your toenails are a very small part of your body, but are important nonetheless. You often don't think about your toenails until they are causing you trouble or discomfort. Here are some of the common problems that can happen with toenails, and what you can do about them.

### **Ingrown Toenails**

Ingrown toenails are small, but painful. They can be caused by improper care of your feet, as well as a genetic tendency toward them. It is important to trim your toenails properly, which is straight across instead of cutting into the corners, and not cutting them too short.

If the problem is unmanageable at home, you may want to see a doctor who can numb the area and then cut the problem area from the toenail. It can be a recurring problem, however.

### **Toenail Fungus**

Toenail fungus happens when fungi grow in the warm, moist areas by your toenails. It is caused by the same bacteria found in athlete's foot infections. To avoid toenail fungus, you should keep your feet dry, and try to avoid having your feet exposed in areas where this fungus is commonly found, such as locker rooms and swimming pools.

If you need to treat toenail fungus, there are several home remedies. One is by mixing two cups of water with one cup of vinegar, and soaking your foot in the mixture for approximately 15 minutes. You can use this solution twice a day until the infection has cleared up.

### **Toenail Trauma**

You may notice a mark that looks like a bruise through your toenail. Toenail trauma can be caused by an accident, such as dropping something heavy on your toe. It can also be caused by long-term irritation, such as walking often in an ill-fitting pair of shoes. Sometimes the toenail bruises, sometimes it thickens, and it can even come off in certain scenarios.

The best way to treat toenail trauma is by keeping the area clean and dry, as loose toenails become susceptible to secondary problems such as toenail fungus. Apply ice to the area and elevate the toenail if it was caused by an injury.

### **Thickened Toenails**

These are generally caused by an injury to the toenail or toenails. The toenail will begin to grow thick. It can be caused by an underlying medical condition, and for this reason it is wise to see a foot doctor, called a podiatrist, if you notice this happening and you are not sure why. A foot doctor can also file the nail down if it is merely a surface problem.

We may not always realize it, but toenails are an important part of our bodies. They protect the toes and as hard as it may be to believe, they also help us with balance and spatial awareness. And when our toes suffer, our whole body suffers.

There are many problems that can afflict the toenail. Some are easily remedied, and others take work and time to correct. Whatever the problem may be with your toenails, there is help available. Use this information to assist you as your care for this important part of your feet.