**Treat Your Feet Right**

**The foot is complex: 26 bones, 33 joints, 107 ligaments, 19 muscles. But it's simple to keep your feet running strong-no matter what you put them through each day-with these smart strategies.**

Your feet take you miles on your morning jog. They work hard to help you reach that summit. They cruise across the dance floor-though sometimes not so gracefully. It's amazing: Our feet carry us through up to 10,000 steps a day. To show them the respect they deserve, energize your feet with these steps.

**SOOTHING SOLUTIONS**

**Raise and relax.** It works any time your feet are flagged: Take off your shoes, sit down, and put your feet up. For maximum effect, elevate your feet at a 45-degree angle to your body, and stay there for at least 20 minutes.

**Try a salty soak.** Lost soles are just a soak away from resurrection if you've got some Epsom salts handy. Add 1 to 2 tablespoons of the salts to a basin of warm water, and soak until you feel better.

**Heat up, cool down.** To awaken weary feet, sit on the edge of the bathtub, and hold your feet under the tap. First, douse your dogs in comfortably hot running water for 1 minute. Then turn the tap to cold for another minute. Repeat the cycle several times, ending with cold water.

**Take matters in hand.** A foot massage can rub out the kinks and relax your aches. Use baby oil for smooth lubrication. Remember to work over the whole foot, including the toes.

**Make nice with ice.** Make an ice pack by wrapping some ice cubes in a wet washcloth, and you've got the perfect antidote for hot, tired feet. Just rub the ice pack wherever you feel aches.

**Try a tea soak.** Steep four bags of peppermint or chamomile tea in 2 cups of boiling water, then add the brew to about 4 litres of hot water in a basin. When the mix is comfortably warm, soak your feet and enjoy the tea's relaxing scent. Follow up with a cold water soak.

**KEEP THEM GOING STRONG**

**Follow in your own footsteps.** If you have to stand for long periods of time, ease the strain on your legs and feet by walking in place whenever you can. Change your stance frequently, and rest one foot on a step or stool if you can.

**Size up your shoes.** Your feet tend to expand a bit as the day goes on, so do your shoe shopping late in the day. Even if you know your size, have your feet measured each time you buy shoes. And make sure both feet get measured, since your feet may not be the same size.

**Rein in those heels.** High heels are murder on your calves, and they tire out your feet. Wear heels under 3/4 inch whenever possible.

**Build strong feet.** Sit in a chair with your feet flat. Then raise them onto the balls of your feet, then onto your toes, and then curl your toes under. Hold each position for 5 seconds, and repeat 10 times each. Do this exercise every day for strong, flexible feet.

**Note:** Check with your doctor before trying any of these remedies if you have diabetes or circulation problems.