



# The Sole Scoop

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Our feet are responsible for carrying us over several thousand steps per day, increasing depending on daily habits and job requirements such as students, athletes, teachers, nurses, etc. They carry us at work, to exercise, shopping, playing sports, the list goes on. They carry our bodies regardless of the extra pounds that we may gain; the ill-fitting, worn out, high heels shoes that we put on; and in spite of how much work they did the day before. It is no wonder that we begin experiencing painful and attention-getting ailments such as bunions, in-grown toenails, calluses, blisters, etc.

Here are a few tips to help you take care of your feet and avoid some painful consequences:

1. Measure your feet for the correct size each time you buy a pair of shoes. Our feet can get larger and wider over time, esp. during pregnancy and as we gain or lose weight. Children and adolescents particularly need this done every few months due to rapid growth.
2. Shoes should be tried on in the store and walked around in for a good feel. Different brands and types may require a different size for a comfortable fit.
3. Remember, shoes should fit with a thumb's width at the toe left over for space and snug enough in the heel to avoid slipping.
4. To avoid in-grown toenails, they should be trimmed straight across, slightly filed at the edge just enough to remove the point. Keep away from significantly rounding the edges (as frequently done with pedicures); this increases the likelihood of an in-grown toenail developing.
5. If your feet are trying to tell you something, listen. If they hurt consider what may be causing the discomfort and correct it. This will help to shun long term problems, including retarded growth in children.
6. Consider cushioned inserts if you are on your feet hours everyday, this will help decrease the trauma that is done day after day.
7. If you or your child is involved in sports, your athletic shoes will need to be replaced approx. every 3 months due to extensive wear.



Are your toes telling you that they want some extra pampering, just in time for sandal season? Here's what they really want:

- Fill a bucket with warm water, check water temp carefully, and soak for approx. 10 minutes.
- Use a pumice stone or foot file to remove dry skin around heels and ball of feet.
- Dry thoroughly, remembering to dry completely between toes. Leaving moisture behind will increase the likelihood of fungus growth.
- Next, apply a thick amount of rich moisturizer all over. Take this time to also gently massage using your thumbs and applying pressure at critical points, including the balls of your feet, the arches and the heels.
- Gently strength your toes by applying pressure with your hands. Rotate your ankles in circular motions several times. Give your calves a good stretch at this time to complete the relaxation process by flexing your foot and gently pulling it up toward slightly.
- Remember to remove any extra moisturizer from between your toes, avoid excess moisture left in these areas.
- Gently push cuticles back with a manicure stick. Cuticles should never be pulled off or pushed back vigorously. This will cause damage and increase risk of infection.

If you have diabetes or other risk factors such as peripheral vascular disease, inspecting your feet daily is critical for the welfare of your feet. A lot of times people do not realize the damage that is caused by some of the simplest of things, such as an ill-fitting pair of shoes, until permanent damage is done. If you have one of these risk factors that decrease your ability to heal then extra precautions should be taken, see your physician for a complete list but here are a few examples:



- ✓ *ALWAYS* make sure your shoes fit adequately.
- ✓ *NEVER* walk barefooted, either inside or outside your house, including when you get out of bed in the middle of the night. Slip on a pair of closed toe slippers, a stubbed toe can cause more grief than an ouch!
- ✓ Always cut your toenails straight across, do not round.
- ✓ Inspect your feet **EVERY DAY**, including between your toes and underneath.
- ✓ Dry thoroughly between your toes after every bath.
- ✓ Take care of the smallest of insults or injuries immediately, and see your MD promptly for any that are not healing.

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