



## Foot Health Fact Sheet

# TOP TIPS TO CARE FOR YOUR FEET

### Did you know...

Your feet are mirrors of your health! Foot issues are warning signs of underlying health conditions, yet many foot problems can be prevented if noticed early.

Richard Lee, registered Podiatrist and Director of The Walking Clinic, recommends these top tips to care for your feet:

#### 1. Maintain healthy nails

A very common thing podiatrists see on a daily basis, are fungal nail infections, this is when the nail becomes discoloured, thickened and brittle.

Mr Lee says, "To help avoid fungal nail infections, frequently wash and dry your feet, avoid going barefoot in public showers or pool areas (thongs are great to wear in public showers), don't wear the same pair of socks two days in a row, hang your socks inside out in the sun (UV light is a natural fungus killer), don't share footwear with other people, air your shoes regularly in the sun and try not to wear the same pair of shoes each day."

Mr Lee suggests adding a drop of tea tree oil into your moisturiser, or adding a few drops to your washing, when washing socks. Making up a diluted spray and spraying your feet can help reduce the risk of fungal infection.

#### 2. Wear correctly fitting shoes

Up to twice your bodyweight in force is applied through your feet and legs with every step, so it's important to have comfortable and appropriate footwear. To avoid pain it is important to have shoes that fit well and are comfortable, especially so for athletes and people who are constantly working on their feet, including tradespeople, teachers, hospital staff, police and emergency services.

Mr Lee says, "We commonly see that people wear shoes that are too small for them, so make sure that there is about 1.5 centimetres (thumb width) of space between your longest toe, which may not be your big toe, and the end of the shoe. Having a shoe that bends with your feet, especially at your toes, is also important not only for comfort, but also for facilitating training routines.

"Don't underestimate comfort, there is now evidence to say that shoe comfort can help reduce injury risk, so make sure that you get the shoe that is most comfortable not just your favourite colour."

#### 3. Foot and lower limb pain or tiredness

It is very important not to ignore what your feet and legs are telling you. One of the most common serious foot conditions in Australia is Plantar Fasciitis, which is noticeable through a deep ache or shooting pain in the heel. Tired feeling legs is another common complaint podiatrist's see.

Mr Lee says, "There can be many different reasons why people might be getting tired legs, from muscle fatigue due to muscle imbalance, through to reduced blood flow or blood pooling in the legs. Seeking podiatry advice can help manage these symptoms and improve your quality of life."



Find a podiatrist at [foothealthaustralia.org.au](http://foothealthaustralia.org.au)

This fact sheet is available as a download from [foothealthaustralia.org.au](http://foothealthaustralia.org.au)



# DO YOU NEED TO SEE A PODIATRIST?



## DOES THE FOLLOWING APPLY TO YOU OR YOUR FAMILY?

- Can you only walk for a short period before your feet or legs hurt?
- Do you experience pain in your lower limbs at night?
- Do you experience tingling in your feet?
- Have you noticed your legs or feet are swollen?
- Do you have cuts or fissures on your feet that take a long time to heal?
- Are you returning to sport after an injury?
- Are you uncertain about which running or sports shoe to buy?
- Do you find that you wear out the outside of your shoes quickly?
- Have you noticed your toes poke holes in the top of your shoes?
- Does your forefoot become hot and painful after running or walking?
- Do your hips hurt?
- Has pain in your feet or legs stopped you from exercising?
- Are you worried about your child's feet?
- Do you have arthritis in your feet?
- Do you experience reoccurring gouty attacks?
- Are you worried about the thickness of your nails?
- Do you have discoloured toe nails?
- Are you worried about your foot odour?
- Do your toe nails cause you pain?
- Have you noticed your toes are clawed?
- Do you have hard skin on your feet? Is it getting worse?
- Do you find it hard to cut your own nails?
- Do you find it hard to fit your feet into shoes because of your bunion?

**Ticked one or more boxes? Then you need to see a podiatrist.**

## GO SEE A PODIATRIST BECAUSE...

Podiatrists are Foot Health Experts and understand the structure and movement of your feet and lower limbs.

They can assess, diagnose and treat foot, ankle, knee, leg or hip pain.

Given your feet alone house a quarter of the bones in your entire body, a podiatrist is best placed to get you moving, active or pain-free.

## FIND A PODIATRIST NEAR YOU

Head to **[foothealthaustralia.org.au](http://foothealthaustralia.org.au)** and search by postcode or suburb to find a podiatrist close to you.



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