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Top 10 Foot Problems, Deal of the Month, Happy Valentine's Day

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## Top 10 Foot Problems And what to do about them



### Don't get side lined

All injuries are a pain, but while most muscle and joint problems prevent you from working out whether you're a gym-goer or pavement pounder, a toe or foot problem also has an excruciating impact on your everyday life. The only time you're not aware of the problem is when you are fast asleep. The rest of your waking day is spent either hobbling on one leg or with your face twisted into a grimace. Or both.

The key to preventing a foot injury becoming a real problem is to identify any issues as early as possible so that you can take the right action to remedy the condition and help your body recover before you end up on the sidelines. Here are the ten most common foot problems – and how to fix them.

### 1. Blisters

Research by the College of Podiatry shows that 90% of foot pain is caused by footwear, and the second most common reason to seek help for feet is [blisters](#). The best way to prevent friction between shoe and foot that causes blistering is to make sure shoes fit properly – meaning they are not so narrow they squeeze the foot and that you have space between your longest toe and the tip of the shoe.



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if it bursts, apply antiseptic. Avoid whatever footwear caused the initial irritation and blister development.

## 2. Fungal Infections

According to research from the National Institute of Health 25% of people have a fungal infection of the foot at any given time, also known as athlete's foot. These can be intensely itchy and cause white, soggy skin or dry, cracked skin between the toes, or reddening and blistering on the rest of the foot. Fungal infections can also spread to the toenails ([onychomycosis](#)) causing the nail to thicken and yellow.

Repairs: Wash feet daily with warm-to-hot water and dry them carefully using a different towel from the rest of your body. Apply [Clarus anti-fungal cream](#). The warm, dark and sweaty environment of shoes is the ideal breeding ground for the fungus, so avoid airless trainers and choose a sock that keeps them as dry as possible, such as those that combine cotton or wool. There's no point sorting your feet out and then re-infecting them in damp shoes so alternate footwear daily (they take 24-48 hours to dry completely) and spray them with [Clarus Shoe Shield](#).

## 3. Corns and Calluses

Corns are concentrated areas of hard, dead skin, which arise as a result of pressure usually over a toe joint. Calluses are areas of dead skin on the sole of the foot.

Repairs: Keep them at bay by sloughing off hard skin using a [pumice stone](#) gently in the bath, and by wearing properly fitted footwear with extra room in the toe area. Steer away from corn removing solutions and medicated pads and never cut away dead skin with a knife as this can sometimes increase irritation and discomfort. Use doughnut-shaped pads for corns on the top of the foot.

## 4. Heel Pain

There are many causes of [heel pain](#). You may have a [heel spur](#), which is a bony growth on the heel or it could be that one of the tendons that connects to the heel is inflamed due to overuse. This is known as Achilles heel and is common in runners. The discomfort can be gradual or flare up after a tough exercise session.

Repairs: Treat by icing, applying a compression bandage and keeping it elevated. If the pain persists, come see us. Wearing the right shoe for the sport when exercising is crucial in avoiding both types of heel pain.

## 5. Back Pain

Back pain affects 40% of the population. A 2013 US study revealed that Americans with flat feet are 50% more likely than those with normal or high arches to develop low back pain. Not all back pain is down to foot problems, but even a short amount of time in the wrong shoes can cause stress and pain to your vertebrae and the soft tissues that support them. Walking the wrong way can cause sciatica, bulging discs and other degenerative spine disorders.

Repairs: Be sure to purchase well-fitting shoes with insoles. Remember that failure to get your shoes fitted properly can lead to months of pain and days lost at work.

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due to dropping heavy objects on them or being stubbed.

Repairs: Call us if your toes are cold and numb, turn blue, or the toe is bent at an angle or has an open wound. If pain and swelling doesn't clear up after a week or so, call us for an appointment and X-rays, the pain and the treatment are pretty much the same whether the toe is broken or not. Keep the injured foot elevated as much as you can; if it is the little toe, strap it to the next one to create a natural splint. All footwear is painful with a broken toe, but a shoe with a stiff sole, such as a walking or hiking boot, will help your mobility.

## 7. Damaged Metatarsals

The metatarsals are the five long bones of the mid-foot and even though, unlike your toes, they are fixed and encased in your foot they are still prone to acute fracture (due to sudden impact) and more prone to stress fracture (due to repeated strain during sports or activity).

Repairs: Overpronation, or excessive flattening of the foot, can lead to stress fracture and this can be avoided by making sure that you are fitted by a specialist with the right sports shoe both for your foot and your chosen activity. [Orthotics](#) can also help prevent pronation and stress fractures.

## 8. Arch Pain

The plantar fascia is the ligament that connects your heel bone to your toes and supports the arch of your foot. If it is over-stretched it can cause an [inflamed and painful arch](#).

Repairs: Wear shoes with good arch support. The pain is often extreme in the morning when you first get out of bed so try some foot exercises before putting foot to ground.

The calf stretch keeps the Achilles tendons and the plantar fasciae from getting too tight and relieves heel pain. Sit with one leg stretched out in front of you and wrap a tension band or towel around the ball of the foot. Pull back gently until you feel a stretch in the arch of the foot and the calf. Hold for 10 seconds; release. Repeat five times on each leg.

It is important to treat the condition before it worsens. If left untreated and strain on the arch continues, you could end up with a heel spur.

## 9. Verrucas

Verrucas are [warts](#) that spring up on the bottom of the feet and around the toes. They are pretty harmless but can be painful. Verrucas are caused by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), which is highly contagious and thrives in damp places such as changing room floors and communal showers.

Repairs: You could catch a verruca just by walking across the same floor as someone who has one, so always wear flip-flops or plastic shoes when changing after the gym or swimming. Folkloric types recommend cleaning with vinegar then applying duct tape for several days to drive them out, however, we recommend using [Verrustat Pads](#) or [Verrustat Liquid](#).

## 10. Ingrown Toenails

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Repairs: Avoid them by cutting nails straight across and never cutting them too low at the edge or down the side of the nail. If pain and swelling persist call us for an appointment. You will need to wear open-toed shoes or sandals while it heals. If pain and swelling continue, see a podiatrist who will remove the spike of nail and cover the wound with an antiseptic dressing.

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## OUR DOCTORS



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DOCTORS OF PODIATRIC MEDICINE (DPM) ARE PODIATRY PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS, ALSO KNOWN AS PODIATRISTS, QUALIFIED BY THEIR EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND EXPERIENCE TO DIAGNOSE AND TREAT CONDITIONS AFFECTING THE FOOT, ANKLE, AND RELATED STRUCTURES OF THE LEG.

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