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Reviewed by **Arefa Cassoobhoy, MD, MPH**, WebMD Medical Editor

HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

FEET FIRST

HEEL-TO-TOE CARETAKING TIPS

By **Matt McMillen**

- 1** *Keep it straight*
Cut straight across with your toenail clippers. Curved nail edges invite ingrown toenails.
- 2** *Easy does it*
Care for your callouses with a pumice stone, foot file, or exfoliating scrub, and use a gentle touch.
- 3** *Exercise your feet*
To help circulation, flex your ankles, wiggle your toes, and stretch your calves.
- 4** *Guard against germs*
In the locker room, wear shower shoes or flip-flops to avoid athlete's foot and plantar warts.
- 5** *Pass inspection*
Check your feet often for cuts, cracks, blisters, bruises, or bumps.



- 6** *Pay attention to pain*
If your feet hurt, see a podiatrist. Discomfort, swelling, and numbness are not normal.
- 7** *Measure up*
Your foot size can change at any age, so get your feet professionally measured regularly when you shoe shop.
- 8** *Change your lineup*
To avoid athlete's foot, let your shoes fully dry before wearing. Don't wear the same pair two days in a row.
- 9** *Pedicure plan*
If you have diabetes, get foot care advice from a podiatrist before you hit the salon.
- 10** *Apply generously*
During the summer, keep your feet, especially the tops, covered with sunblock.

EXPERT TIPS



Leslie Campbell, DPM
podiatrist, Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital, Allen, Texas

Athlete's foot can lurk in all public areas. Limit walking barefoot. It exposes feet to sunburn, as well as plantar warts, athlete's foot, ringworm, and other infections—and the risk of injury to your feet.

If you suspect an infection due to an ingrown toenail, soak the foot in warm saltwater, then apply an antiseptic and bandage the area.



Wenjay Sung, DPM
podiatrist, White Memorial Medical Group Los Angeles, Calif.

Wear socks made of synthetic fiber that wicks moisture away from your feet faster than cotton or wool.

If you're an athlete, ask your podiatrist which shoes are best for your sport. Replace athletic shoes yearly; if you're a runner, you need new shoes every 300 to 400 miles.



Rondrick Williamson, DPM
podiatrist, Podiatry Care of Georgia Atlanta, Ga.

If you're prone to swollen ankles or calves and you sit a lot at work, elevate your legs with a footstool under your desk. At the end of the day, reduce swelling by lying down and lifting your legs above the level of your heart.

If you have specific health challenges or foot issues, talk to a podiatrist about the best footwear for your needs.