

# HAPPY

THEY WORK HARD FOR YOUR BODY, SO YOU BETTER TREAT THEM RIGHT. HOW TO STRENGTHEN, PAMPER, AND PROTECT THEM.

# FEET



## WEAR AND TEAR

When you walk, your feet bear the force of 1½ times your body weight. When you run, they feel the force of 2 to 3 times your weight. That force reduces the shock absorption and support in your athletic shoes, so replace them every six months.

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### FOOT NOTES

Your foot is a marvel of human nature, packing in more than 100 muscles, tendons, and ligaments, 33 joints in each foot, and 26 bones—nearly a quarter of your body's total.

## sole strength

Feet do all the heavy lifting—literally carrying the weight of your body. They need exercise to stay strong. But because shoes often restrict feet, they don't get much movement. Try these moves from Katy Bowman, author of *Whole Body Barefoot*.

### 1 FOOT STRETCH

Sit near the edge of a chair (barefoot). Reach right foot back, tucking toes under so the top of your foot touches the ground, heel centered. Hold, repeat with left foot.

### 2 TOE TENSE & RELEASE

Flexible toes give your feet a wider base of support. Keeping toes on the ground, spread them as far apart as you comfortably can. Hold for two seconds, relax, repeat.

### 3 BIG TOE LIFTS

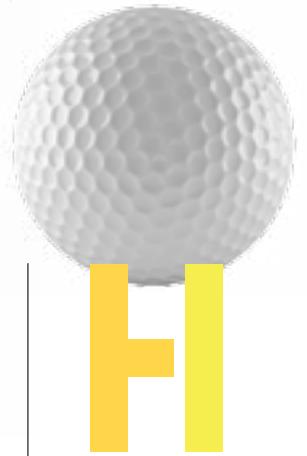
Raise your left big toe without lifting your other toes. Lower and repeat five times; repeat with the right big toe.

### 4 HIPS OVER HEELS

Most people carry their weight on the forefoot, rather than the stronger back part. Stand straight, and shift your weight (hips) back over heels without lifting toes.

# what *not* to wear

One of the most important factors that impacts the health of your feet? Your shoes. Sadly this pink number is the opposite of what your feet should be in every day. We break down why and what to look for instead.



## HEELS HOW-TO

On the rare occasions calling for heels, use these ease-the-strain tips from Emily Splichal, D.P.M., M.S.

### SHORTEN YOUR STRIDE

Taking smaller steps helps stop you from leaning forward.

### MASSAGE AFTERWARD

Roll each foot over the top of a golf ball for five minutes. This gets muscles moving, which gets fluids moving to hydrate tissues. Chill the ball for anti-inflammatory power.

### FOOT SIZE TEST >>

Stand on a piece of paper and trace your foot. Place your shoe over that outline, and trace the shoe. If your foot outline is larger than the shoe, it's likely too narrow and small.

### 1 TOE BOX

#### WHAT'S WRONG

A narrow toe box squishes the front of your foot, causing pain, says podiatrist Alison Garten.

**LOOK FOR** A toe box that allows you to comfortably spread and wiggle your toes.

### 2 SOLE

#### WHAT'S WRONG

A too-stiff sole doesn't allow the bones, joints, and muscles in your feet to move freely.

**LOOK FOR** A sole you can bend and twist but not fold in half (which means it's not supportive).

### 3 HEEL

#### WHAT'S WRONG

Anything 3 inches or higher pitches your body forward, straining the front of your foot, knees, and lower back. **LOOK FOR** A heel 2 inches or lower is best. Your foot shouldn't be bent into a sharp angle.

Shop late in the day to find a shoe that's comfortable when your feet are most swollen.

ALISON GARTEN, PODIATRIST

## FOOT FOES

### PLANTAR FASCIITIS

About 10 percent of us struggle with this overuse injury, which can cause pain, especially in the heel. Roll your feet over a golf ball or RAD roller (\$24.99; [radroller.com](http://radroller.com)) for five minutes twice a day. **BUNIONS** They may be the result of flat feet or too-tight shoes. Podiatrist Emily Splichal recommends the Bunion Bootie (\$33.95; [bunionbootie.com](http://bunionbootie.com)), a soft splint that gently and temporarily straightens the big toe. **PLANTAR WARTS** Easily picked up by going barefoot at the pool or gym locker room, they often develop on pressure points like heels or balls of the feet. OTC salicylic acid pads may work, but you'll likely need to see a doc for freezing or laser treatments.



### SANDAL SENSE

YOU CAN FIND A COMFY SANDAL THAT LOOKS GOOD. EXHIBIT A: VIONIC'S NALA T-STRAP SANDAL WITH BUILT-IN ANKLE, HEEL, ARCH SUPPORT. \$99.95; [VIONICSHOES.COM](http://VIONICSHOES.COM)

### A BIG SLIPUP: WEARING SHOES THAT ARE TOO FLAT & FLEXIBLE

"Flip-flops and ballet flats are the worst shoes for your feet," says Suzanne Levine, D.P.M., coauthor of *My Feet Are Killing Me!* "There's no support, and your toes and foot muscles constantly strain to grip the shoe as you walk." Ouch. Save flip-flops for the pool or beach, and look for ballet-style shoes with support in the footbed.

# BEST FOOT *forward*

Shoe inserts look comfy, but can they make a difference?

**YES.** For arch or heel pain, give these over-the-counter orthotics a try. To pick the right one for your feet, Alison Garten, D.P.M. and president of the American Association for Women Podiatrists, advises purchasing them from a podiatrist or running shoe store, where staff is trained to match one to your arch and gait.

**SOLE SUPPORT ▶ (FROM LEFT) ■ POWERSTEP SLENDERFIT** Designed to fit into heels, the S shape gives extra arch and heel support. \$34.95; [powersteps.com](http://powersteps.com) ■ **CURREX** Choose from inserts designed to meet the needs of your arch and activities. \$49.99; [currexsole.com](http://currexsole.com) for stores ■ **TIMBERLAND PRO ANTI-FATIGUE TECHNOLOGY** Foam absorbs shock; an antimicrobial layer keeps odors away. \$29.99; [timberland.com](http://timberland.com)



**GOT FOOT PAIN? IF IT DOESN'T GO AWAY IN TWO WEEKS, SEE A PODIATRIST. FIND ONE AT [APMA.ORG](http://APMA.ORG).**

## YOGA FOR FEET

Warrior I pose helps strengthen foot muscles, says Roger Cole, Ph.D., an Iyengar yoga teacher.

Stand with feet together. Turn left foot out 30 degrees. Step right foot forward about 2 to 3 feet. Lift arms straight overhead. Keep left knee straight. Face forward. Keeping the outer edge of your left foot firmly on the floor, bend your right knee until it's directly above right ankle. Hold 30 seconds. Repeat on other side. ■



## PRETTY PEDI

Prep for sandal season with this DIY treatment from Patty Norcross, director of The Ritz-Carlton Spa, Chicago.

- 1 SOAK** Soak feet in a foot-size tub filled with warm water and ¼ cup Epsom salts for 10 minutes. This helps soften the skin to prep for exfoliation.
- 2 SCRUB** Combine ½ cup kosher salt and ½ cup olive oil into a paste, and gently scrub feet. The salt's coarse grains remove dead skin cells, and the olive oil moisturizes.
- 3 SOFTEN** Slather honey all over feet; let sit for 10 minutes. The honey helps lock in moisture to prevent cracked heels. Rinse your feet in the Epsom salts-water mix from Step 1, then towel dry.

**PRO TIP ▶** Foot model Ellen Sirot keeps her feet photo-ready by shaping toenails squoval—square along the top, rounded at corners to help stop ingrown toenails.