

## Protecting Your Feet

The average number of steps per day that a person takes fluctuates based on age, sex, occupation, and even location. The journal *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise* reported that Americans average 5,117 steps per day. Switzerland and Western Australia average the highest number of steps per day at over 9,000 per day.

## Tips to Keeping Your Feet Healthy

- Dr. Vincent, a board certified podiatrist, recommends wearing a good walking shoe for long days of standing and walking. Dr. Vincent recommends brands such as Brooks, Asics and New Balance.
- Podiatrist, Dr. Jason Gold, recommends wearing a supportive shoe at least 80% of the time. And for the other 20%, you can wear whatever shoes you like. Also, avoid wearing high heels for an entire day, every day. Wearing high heels causes your feet to go into pronation which can lead to bunions, hammer toes, and plantar fasciitis.
- Avoid walking around barefoot—even in your home. Dr. Gold recommends wearing a supportive pair of sneakers when walking around in your home, especially if you have more tile and marble than carpet. If you constantly walk around barefoot, you can develop calluses or even fat pad atrophy which will make walking barefoot very uncomfortable. Additionally, avoid walking barefoot in public places. Walking barefoot in public places increases the chance of plantar's wart, verruca, and foreign body exposure.
- Avoid wearing non-running shoes when running. Running shoes are made for running and a forward motion vs. a lateral motion. Wearing the right shoes for the intended activity can help prevent injury and help your shoes to last longer.
- Avoid wearing cotton socks. Cotton socks can retain moisture and cause blisters and foot fungus. It is best to stick to socks made of synthetic material.



- When going to a nail salon, ensure that they follow hygiene and cleanliness standards. Ensure that instruments have been sanitized in an autoclave to avoid infections like MRSA—a staph infection, ingrown nails and foot cellulitis.
- Ensure that you tie your shoe laces. Not tying the laces in your shoes can greatly reduce the support function of your shoes, as well as cause you to trip and fall. Decreased support can cause complications in a person who has flat or low-arch type feet.
- Replace your shoes when they show signs of wear. To check if your shoes need to be replaced, you can flip them over and exam the soles for: asymmetry, whether the tread pattern is worn and smooth; if there is an outline of your toes in the sole; or if you can see the shape of your toes popping out. If your shoes show sign of wear, it is time to replace them.

## **Why is Foot Care So Important?**

- Foot complications can make you more susceptible to accidents and falls.
- Walking awkwardly because of foot complications can set you off balance and increases your risk of injury.
- Foot complications can affect your quality of life and work productivity.

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