

FootScope

A foot health message from

KEEPING YOUR FEET HEALTHY THIS SUMMER

Top tips for healthy summer feet

- 1. Nail care:** Keep toenails trimmed straight across with nail clippers and avoid cutting too close to the skin or down at the corners as this can invite infection and the development of ingrown toenails. If nails are discoloured or cracked, don't cover the problem with nail varnish — let them breathe. You may need an antifungal cream to clear up any problems beneath the nail bed.
- 2. Use good judgement** to avoid hazards to bare feet — shoes are necessary to protect your feet from injury so avoid walking barefoot and only take your shoes off when you know it is safe. Always wear shoes around public swimming pools or communal changing areas where fungal and bacterial infections are just waiting for a new foot to attach to.
- 3. Don't forget the sunblock!** Your feet are just as vulnerable to UV rays as the rest of you and are often forgotten in the sunscreen stakes.
- 4. It's sandal season:** bring out the sandals and the thongs, but avoid wearing flimsy or unsupportive shoes all summer. Wearing open shoes will allow your feet to breathe and lower the risk of infections from hot and sweaty feet. Wearing shoes with plenty of support will prevent heel and arch pain.
- 5. Avoiding blisters:** blisters can be avoided by alternating footwear so that shoes don't rub on the same areas continually. If a blister does occur, try to switch to shoes that allow the blister to breathe without requiring a plaster — the blister will heal faster.
- 6. Socks:** if you need to wear socks for foot protection or comfort, be sure to change them daily or more frequently in very hot weather. If socks get damp with sweat, bacteria will build up, leading to increased risk of infection. Moisture wicking socks, such as those used for sport, help to draw sweat away from your feet and can be useful to keep your feet as dry as possible. Natural fibres are recommended.

7. Deal with dry skin: in the summer months, it's easy for dry skin to build up in areas where straps and soles rub against the soft skin of your feet. The heels are a particular target area for dry skin, which can be broken down through daily use of a pumice stone or foot file. This works best straight after a shower when the skin is clean and soft, followed by liberal application of a moisturising cream or lotion on dry areas.

8. Soak up the sweat: if sweaty feet are becoming problematic in the heat, particularly when smell is involved, wash your feet twice daily in soapy water or an antibacterial wash and dry carefully, especially between your toes. Apply talcum powder to keep feet dry and sweat free.

9. Hydrate: keeping up the fluids is good for your entire body during hot weather and will help to reduce swelling in your feet.

