

The Everything Feet *Foot Health Guide*

Practical, evidence-based foot care from an HCPC-registered podiatrist

Five habits that keep feet healthy

- **Check your feet weekly.** Look for new hard skin, cracked heels, colour changes, or nails growing into the skin. Problems caught early are far easier to treat.
- **Wash and dry thoroughly — especially between the toes.** Trapped moisture between the toes is the most common starting point for athlete's foot.
- **Moisturise daily, but not between the toes.** A urea-based foot cream keeps heels supple and helps prevent painful cracking.
- **Cut nails straight across.** Cutting down into the corners is a common cause of ingrown toenails. File sharp edges rather than digging them out.
- **Rotate your shoes.** Giving shoes a day to dry out reduces fungal problems and lets cushioning recover.

The 60-second footwear check

Worn-out or unsupportive shoes are behind a large share of the foot pain we see. Check your most-worn pair:

- **Twist test:** hold the shoe at both ends and twist. It should resist — a shoe that wrings like a towel offers little support.
- **Sole wear:** heavy wear on the inner edge suggests overpronation (your arch rolling inward on each step).
- **Heel counter:** squeeze the back of the heel. It should feel firm, not collapse flat.
- **Fit:** you should have about a thumb's width beyond your longest toe, and the shoe should hold your heel without slipping.

Heel pain? Two stretches with good evidence behind them

For plantar fasciitis — the most common cause of heel pain — regular stretching is one of the best-supported self-treatments. Aim for both stretches, twice daily, especially before your first steps in the morning:

- **Calf stretch:** hands against a wall, painful leg straight behind you, heel on the floor. Lean in until you feel a stretch in the calf. Hold 30 seconds, repeat 3 times each side.
- **Plantar fascia stretch:** seated, cross the painful foot over your knee and gently pull the toes back toward your shin until you feel a stretch along the sole. Hold 30 seconds, repeat 3 times.

Improvement is usually gradual — think weeks, not days. Supportive footwear and, where appropriate, orthotic support work alongside stretching, not instead of it.

On your feet all day?

Prolonged standing loads the same structures continuously. Cushioned, supportive shoes make the biggest difference; insoles that spread load more evenly help many people; and where you can, alternate tasks or positions so the same tissue isn't loaded for hours unbroken. Cheap foam insoles flatten quickly under daily use — if yours are compressed, they've stopped helping.

When to seek professional help

See a podiatrist or your GP rather than self-treating if you have: pain that has lasted more than a few weeks or is getting worse; numbness, tingling or burning; an ingrown nail that is red, swollen or weeping; any foot wound that is slow to heal; or sudden flattening of one arch in adulthood.

If you have diabetes: your feet need extra care. Check them daily, never self-treat corns or hard skin with blades or acid-based products, and have any new problem assessed promptly — small issues can escalate quickly with reduced circulation or sensation.

Persistent foot, heel or arch pain? Everything Feet provides bespoke 3D-printed medical orthotics, prescribed by an HCPC-registered podiatrist after a 10-minute phone consultation — £399 all-inclusive, delivered UK-wide. shop.everythingfeet.co.uk

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