
Why Do My Feet Hurt?

A User's Guide to

Foot and Ankle Health

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Why I Wrote This Book

To begin, I'm a podiatrist. What that means I'll cover in detail later in this book, but for now, it's enough to know that I am a specialist in the care and treatment of feet and ankles. My name is Dr. Harvey R. Danciger, and I am the founder of this podiatric practice.

I'm also an active member of my community. Because of my unique training in the care of feet and ankles, I see people every day who suffer from foot pain. So often my patients tell me that they've been experiencing symptoms, including pain, for very long periods of time before they finally come in to see me. In some cases they've waited years! Sometimes when I'm out in the community, at the grocery store, for example, I'll see folks I know who say, "Hi Doc. You know I need to come in to see you because I've got a pain in my ankle or my heel hurts." Then months will go by and I'll see them again and they'll repeat the same thing.

When they finally do come in, in almost every case I am able to alleviate their pain, treat their condition, and drastically improve their quality of life.

The big question I used to ask myself is "Why?" Why do people suffer needlessly for years when a quick trip to see me almost always relieves their problems? It used to bother me, but as I've continued to see patients I've come to understand that sometimes fear of the unknown is stronger than the pain or inconveniences my patients face.

What I've also learned is that in case after case-even though my patients could have saved themselves time, trouble, and expense by just coming in to see me- patients didn't have enough information to help them clearly understand their foot pain and the incredible options that state-of-the art podiatric medicine offers today.

So, I created this publication. I wrote it for you. I also wrote it to help you clearly understand what is happening with your feet and to help you get a sense of the help that is awaiting you at a podiatrist's office. I hope it is helpful and that it answers your questions. If after reading it you think you might be helped by seeing a podiatrist, I hope you consider

Harvey R. Danciger, DPM. My staff and I will do everything we can to treat your condition, reduce or eliminate your pain, and make you feel at home.

Dedicated to your health,

Dr. Harvey R. Danciger

Dr. Harvey R. Danciger

What Causes Foot Pain?

The most common foot problems are:

- **Athlete's Foot** or **Dermatitis** is an infection that is caused by various types of fungus. It is passed in public areas where people typically are in their bare feet such as water parks, pools, and hotel showers. Athlete's foot can be as mild as itching and scaling to as severe as quite painful inflammation and blisters. Like all fungus it thrives in dark, moist areas like the spaces between your toes and then spreads to other areas of your feet. In some cases, over-the-counter potions or powders can treat the fungus.
- **Bunions** are caused by your big toe joints becoming incorrectly aligned. This causes the first joint on your big toe to slant outward and the second joint then angles toward your other toes. Your joints then begin to swell. It causes a bump of bone on the foot that can become very painful if left untreated.



- **Chronic wounds** are open sores known as ulcers that can become seriously infected, gangrenous, and in some cases necessitate amputation. This is often due to limited blood flow which can slow the body's own healing process. Many patients seek professional help for wounds that have not healed after months of standard wound treatment. In the majority of patients, treatment programs produce complete healing, usually within a few months.
- **Corns** and **Calluses** are frequently symptoms of other foot conditions. These common foot ailments are actually thickening of the skin, often caused by friction from within the foot – a bone protuberance, bone misalignment, or by friction from outside- shoes repeatedly pressing or rubbing. Calluses can be located anywhere on the foot but are usually located on the soles of the feet, corns form on the toes or in between toes in which case they are called “soft corns”. Never cut corns or calluses with any instrument, and never apply home remedies by yourself.
- **Diabetic Neuropathy** is characterized by numbness and lack of feeling in the feet. It is a complication of diabetes that affects the nerves that causes this condition. Since diabetic neuropathy can cause a person to lose his or her ability to feel pain, it is possible for a patient to develop minor cuts and sores without realizing it. If left untreated these minor wounds can develop into ulcers and sometimes even lead to amputation. Other results of diabetic neuropathy can be bunions, hammertoe, and Charcot Foot.
- **Fungal Nails** are caused by an infection that occurs underneath the surface of your nails. Sometimes the infection can penetrate inside your nails. In both cases they can be quite painful and impede your ability to walk or run. The fungus can cause the nail to become discolored, misshapen, and malodorous. Sometimes we can prescribe oral or topical medication and remove the diseased nail portions through a process known as debridement. In other cases we can surgically remove the

infected nail and eliminate the fungus completely. This can allow a new healthy nail to grow.

- **Gout** is a form of arthritis that is caused by an inflammation in your joints due to an accumulation of urate crystals in your body. This happens when your body either produces too much or too little uric acid. Symptoms include severe and sudden attacks of pain, redness, and tenderness in joints.
- **Hammertoe** occurs when the muscles in your feet become unbalanced and your toe develops a sideways bend in your middle toe joint. Hammertoes are often associated with bunions that can contribute to the development of hammertoes. Pain can result from the undue pressure hammertoes can create in shoe fit.
- **Heel spurs**, a common cause of heel pain are bony growths on the underside of the heel bone. If there is no evidence of bone enlargement on an X-ray the condition is sometimes referred to as “heel spur syndrome.” Heel spurs are caused by the strain on the muscles and ligaments of the foot and the resulting tearing away of the lining or membrane that covers your heel bone. Another name for this is **plantar fasciitis**. This can be caused by improperly fit shoes, excessively worn shoes or failure to stretch and warm-up before jogging or running.
- **Hyperhidrosis** or excessive sweating is caused by over-active sweat glands on the bottom of the foot. Also known as trench foot, if left untreated it can lead to thickened, macerated, and painful skin on the soles of the feet. A big side effect of this condition is unpleasant foot odor.
- **Ingrown toenails** are caused by a portion of your nail pressing into the flesh of your toe resulting in pain. There are many causes for ingrown toenails such as lack of or improper nail trimming, poorly fitting shoes, injuries, infections, or fungus. Proper shoe selection and careful attention to regular nail trimming can help prevent this painful condition.

- **Neuromas** occur most commonly between the third and fourth toes. They are caused by a pinching of the nerves between the metatarsals, which results in inflammation. As the irritation continues, the nerve gets larger and causes sharp pain, cramping, and burning. Shoes that are too tight will aggravate the condition.

- **Sports Injuries** are being seen with increasing frequency as Americans continue to make regular exercise part of their overall fitness plan. Sports injuries to the foot and ankle can be caused by trauma, improper warm-up, overuse, improper footwear, and playing on hard surfaces. Podiatrists who treat sports injuries have a working knowledge of individual sports and the commonly associated injuries. They also have a thorough understanding of the best treatments for these injuries.



What Can a Podiatrist Do About Foot Pain?

Let's start at the beginning and answer the question, "**What is a Podiatrist?**"

A podiatrist is a specialist who focuses on your feet and ankles. We are quite simply "The Experts" on your feet and ankles and should be the very first doctor you call when

you experience pain or other problems with them. I've listed many of the foot problems podiatrists treat in this book.

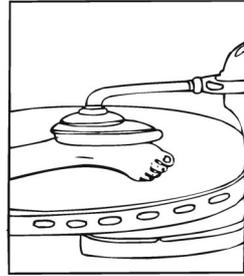


The DPM after our name stands for Doctor of Podiatric Medicine. Most people know that podiatrists deal with foot and ankle problems and work with seniors, or diabetics, or people with poor circulation; but what most people don't know is that podiatrists treat patients of all ages. A podiatrist is also well-qualified to help children and young adults with the problems that they can experience with their feet and ankles.

Podiatrists are required, just like any other doctor, to be licensed by the state in which they practice. When medically necessary, podiatrists can perform surgery to correct or remedy problems. Before we recommend surgery, we will explore the many conservative therapies and remedies that are available for our patients and then recommend the very best course of treatment. As medical science advances and new therapies become available to the public, podiatrists are increasingly able to offer their patients some of the most state-of-the-art care available. I'm constantly amazed at the new therapies I can offer my patients and will discuss several of them now.

Conservative Foot Care

Also known as non-surgical treatment, conservative foot care is being used to treat many foot problems with dramatic results. Any initial visit to a podiatrist's office will start with a patient history and physical examination. Diagnostic X-rays and laboratory tests can also be used to help determine the best course of treatment.



Non-surgical treatments may be called for in many cases including medical conditions which preclude the option of elective surgery, time commitment constraints, and elderly patients with many medical conditions. Patients with arthritis, diabetes, and circulatory foot problems may all be helped by non-surgical treatments. In spite of not being able to opt for foot surgery many patients find great relief from pain and discomfort through the use of conservative foot care treatments.

There are a wide variety of non-surgical treatments being used by podiatrists today. Injections, oral and topical medications, and foot, ankle, or toe strappings are all examples of conservative foot care. Other options are exercise, custom-made walking shoes, and orthotics. Additional treatments prescribed by podiatrists include physical therapy, foot massage, trimming of corns and calluses, and proper nail trimming and foot care.

Orthotics

Custom-made foot supports known as orthotic devices that are worn under your heel and the arch of your foot are referred to as orthotics. These devices are molded to be anatomically matched to your foot and they do more than just provide support. Orthotics are designed to realign your foot to a neutral or natural position to alleviate pain in your feet, legs and back, as well as to restore balance, improve sports performance, and relieve foot fatigue.



Research shows that the majority of foot problems can be directly connected to skeletal imbalance. More people tend to have some amount of either hyperpronation (flat feet) or hypersupination (high arches). The presence of these conditions can cause the foot to be unstable during normal everyday activity. This constant stress on the feet can lead to pain in the feet, ankles, legs, knees, hips, and back. Orthotics can improve function in the foot by compensating for existing imbalances and in most cases can relieve or prevent the associated pains.

How do you know if the use of orthotics is right for you? If you have an obvious imbalance that causes such symptoms as flat feet or high arches, or if you have external misalignments such as “knock knees”, “bow knees”, in-toeing, or out-toeing you are probably a good candidate for orthotics. If you participate in an activity that places stress on your feet or if your work requires you to be on your feet for extended periods orthotics could be beneficial. The use of orthotics is just one of the conservative foot treatments used in our offices. They can be used to treat foot, heel, and arch pain, some calluses, diabetic ulcers and pressure sores, arthritis, abnormal foot function, and to prevent sports injuries or improve sports function. Orthotics can be used to treat children as well as adults. The best way to find out if orthotics can help you is to make an appointment with us for an exam.

Foot and Ankle Surgery

In some cases foot problems do not respond to conservative treatments. A podiatrist can best determine when foot surgery might be beneficial. In cases when pain or deformity persists surgery may be needed to restore full foot function.

Prior to surgery a podiatric surgeon will review your medical history and perform an examination. Specific medical tests may be required before undergoing foot and ankle surgery. These tests may include X-rays, blood tests, urinalysis, and blood flow studies to determine the circulatory status of your feet and legs.

The length and method of postoperative care that is needed is determined by the type of surgery performed. All postoperative care includes some degree of rest, ice, compression, and elevation. Other elements can include bandages, splints, surgical shoes, casts, crutches, and canes. Recovery can be quickened by carefully following your podiatrist's instructions.

ESWT

Extracorporeal Shock Wave Therapy treatments use high-power sound waves to end chronic heel pain without painful surgery. This treatment is now being offered by our office as an alternative to invasive heel surgery. The discovery of ESWT came about somewhat by accident. Shock wave therapy is used regularly by urologists to break up and disperse kidney stones. Urologists began reporting that patients who had kidney stones treated showed increased bone density and new tissue growth. This led to studies for using shock wave therapy for soft tissue injuries and the results were amazing—75%-80% of patients with soft tissue injuries were reported to be healed or greatly improved following ESWT.

Shock wave therapy works by purposely targeting trauma at the pain site. This stimulates the diseased tissue and activates your body's own healing process. Blood and oxygen rush to the site, activating a metabolic response that fosters healing by the growth of new connective tissue. This is what is damaged and torn when you have plantar fasciitis

or heel spur pain. The most important and exciting aspects of ESWT are that it ends the pain, the procedure is not painful, there isn't a lengthy recovery period, and there are no side effects.

Pediatric Foot Care

Podiatrists are trained to care for the feet and ankles of patients of all ages and activity levels. Many foot ailments originate in childhood and some are even present at birth. It is a good idea to seek the advice of a podiatrist if you notice something about your baby's feet that doesn't look normal. As children grow and their feet continue to develop, foot problems can result from injury, deformity, illness, hereditary factors, and improper footwear. If you suspect your child has any foot ailments that make walking difficult or uncomfortable you should have a thorough examination performed by a podiatrist. A podiatrist can also provide advice on ways to prevent sports-related injuries when your child starts to participate in team and individual sports. When necessary, a podiatrist knows the best way to treat sports-related foot and ankle injuries as well.

How Does a Podiatrist Treat Common Ailments?

Now that we know what a podiatrist is and some of the treatments available, let's take a look at some specific foot problems and the treatments we can offer to reduce or eliminate your pain. It is impossible to discuss all the potential problems that can affect your foot health in a book of this size, but what I want to tell you about here are the problems we see most often at our offices.

Achilles Tendonitis

Achilles, the Greek mythology hero, was vulnerable only at his heel. Achilles shared this trait with the rest of us and that is why this tendon which connects the calf muscles to the heel bone bears his name today. The Achilles tendon is the largest tendon in the human body and is very strong, but is also the tendon we rupture the most often. Everyone who is active can suffer from Achilles tendonitis, a common overuse injury and inflammation of the tendon.

Symptoms of Achilles tendonitis include mild pain after exercise or running that gradually worsens, a noticeable sense of sluggishness in your leg, and episodes of diffuse or localized pain, sometimes severe, along the tendon during or a few hours after running. Other symptoms can be swelling, morning tenderness in the Achilles tendon, or stiffness that generally diminishes as the tendon warms up with use.

Treatment depends on the degree of injury to the tendon, but normally includes rest, which may mean a total withdrawal from running or exercise for a week, or simply switching to another exercise, such as swimming, that does not stress the Achilles tendon. Treatment can also include nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medication, orthoses, which are devices to help support the muscle and relieve stress on the tendon such as a heel pad or shoe insert, a bandage specifically designed to restrict motion of the tendon, and stretching, massage, ultrasound and appropriate exercises to strengthen the weak muscle group in front of the leg and the upward foot flexors.

Arch Pain

Plantar fasciitis is an inflammation of a thick, fibrous ligament in the arch of the foot called the plantar fascia. The plantar fascia attaches into the heel bone and fans out toward the ball of the foot, attaching into the base of the toes. If this ligament is stretched excessively it will become inflamed and begin to cause pain.



Cortisone injections, used in the treatment of heel pain, are not commonly used for the treatment of plantar fasciitis. The main emphasis of treatment is to reduce the forces that are causing the plantar fascia to stretch excessively. This includes calf muscle stretching, over the counter arch supports, orthotics, and sub-talar implants. Oral anti-inflammatory medications may be useful in controlling the pain.

Arthritis

Over 30 million American adults report being told by a doctor that they

have some type of arthritis. It is a major cause of lost work time and serious disability for many people. Although arthritis is mainly a disease of adults, children may also have it. When a patient has arthritis, it means that the cartilage and even the lining of their joints has become swollen and inflamed.

There are numerous types of arthritis. The reason that your feet seem to be more susceptible to arthritis than other parts of your body is that your feet have so many joints that can be affected. The odds are just stacked against your feet. In addition, your feet and ankles bear the full weight of your entire body every single day.

While there are dozens of types of arthritis, I want to point out two of the most common.

Osteoarthritis

The most common type of arthritis is osteoarthritis. It is seen in many people as they age, although it may begin when they are younger as a result of injury or overuse. It is often more painful in weight bearing joints such as the knee, hip, and spine than in the wrist, elbow, and shoulder joints. All joints may be affected if they are used extensively in work or sports, or if they have been damaged from fractures or other injuries.

In osteoarthritis, the cartilage covering the ends of the bones gradually wears away. In many cases, bone growths called "spurs" can develop in osteoarthritis joints. The joint inflammation causes pain and swelling. Continued use of the joint produces pain. Some relief may be possible through rest or modified activity.

Rheumatoid Arthritis

Rheumatoid arthritis is a long-lasting disease that can affect many parts of the body, including the joints. Rheumatoid arthritis can affect people of all ages, even children. However, more than 70 percent of people with this disease are over 30 years old. Many joints of the body may be involved at the same time. Arthritis cannot be cured but it can be treated. The goals of treatment are to provide pain relief, increase motion, and improve strength.

The key to treating arthritis in your feet is early detection and proper care from a podiatrist. Be cautious by checking your feet every day. If you begin to experience swelling, redness or stiffness, especially in the morning when you wake up and start walking, give us a call so we can determine what the problem is.

Bunions

Bunions are caused by your big toe joints becoming incorrectly aligned. This causes the first joint on your big toe to slant outward and the second joint then angles toward your other toes. Your joints then begin to swell. It causes a bump of bone on the foot that can become very painful if left untreated.

Bunions can be hereditary, but also can be aggravated by shoes that aren't a good fit. Surgery is often recommended to correct the problem. Most bunions can be treated without surgery by wearing protective pads to cushion the painful area, and of course, avoiding ill-fitting shoes in the first place.

Diabetes

Diabetes can affect many parts of the body, especially the feet. According to the American Diabetes Association, about 15.7 million Americans (5.9 percent of the United States population) have diabetes. It is very important that a diabetic gives the feet very special care. A small problem in a healthy person could become a severe one to a diabetic.

Diabetes can affect the feet in a number of different ways. The first is infection, which is one of the most common complications of the diabetic foot. Because diabetes causes reduced immune response, a diabetic patient's ability to fight infection is decreased. Early treatment of infection is a critical component to success. If neglected, infection of the foot can cause gangrene, ulceration, osteomyelitis, and even amputation.

Another complication of diabetes called neuropathy causes decreased sensation to pain and temperature. This may cause a patient to underestimate a foot problem. It may also be responsible for an absence

of perspiration leading to dry, cracking skin that can more easily become infected.

Foot ulcers are local skin defects with inflammation or infection. They can be caused by lack of circulation, infection, lack of protection, and improperly fitting shoes. A break in the skin without proper treatment may become an ulcer. Diabetics are at higher risk for developing foot ulcers.

With a diabetic foot, a wound as small as a blister from wearing a shoe that's too tight can cause a lot of damage. Diabetes decreases blood flow, so injuries are slow to heal. When your wound is not healing, it's at risk for infection. As a diabetic, your infections spread quickly. If you have diabetes, you should inspect your feet every day. Look for puncture wounds, bruises, pressure areas, redness, warmth, blisters, ulcers, scratches, cuts and nail problems. Get someone to help you, or use a mirror. Diabetic foot care can be very complicated and good podiatric care is an essential component of managing diabetes.

Here is some basic advice for the care of diabetic feet:

- Inspect your feet every day.
- Keep your feet clean and dry.
- Always keep your feet warm.
- Take extra care drying your feet and toes after showering. Pay special attention to the space between your toes.
- Be sure to exercise. Walking is one of the best exercises for diabetics unless you have complications. If you struggle with balance use a cane.
- Always protect your feet and legs. Never walk barefoot. Avoid hot water bottles and heating pads.
- Do not overexpose skin to the sun.

- If your skin is dry use moisturizing cream or lotion daily. Do not, however, apply between the toes.
- Cut your toenails straight across and even with the skin on the end of your toes. Do not cut into the corners. If you can't see or reach your toenails have someone else do it for you.
- Never use razor blades, knives, scissors or medicated corn/wart removers.
- Look for redness, blisters, scratches, cracks between the toes, discoloration or any other change.
- Avoid all actions that diminish circulation such as tobacco use, sitting with legs crossed, and circular elastic garters.
- Change your shoes and socks daily.
- Wear soft leather shoes that conform to the shape of your foot.
- Gradually "break in" new shoes and avoid blisters.
- Call us if you see any changes in your feet.



When your feet lose their feeling, they are at risk for becoming deformed. When this happens, your feet are more prone to developing ulcers. Open sores may become infected. Another way is the bone condition **Charcot (pronounced "sharko") Foot**. This is one of the most serious foot problems you can face. It warps the shape of your foot when your bones fracture and disintegrate, and yet you continue to walk on it because it doesn't hurt. Diabetic foot ulcers and early phases of Charcot fractures can be treated simply with non-surgical measures.

Fungal Nails

Fungal infections of the nail bed, matrix, or nail plate are responsible for about 50% of all cases of thick, discolored toenails. There are four different types of fungal nail infections classified by the part of the nail

involved. Fungal nails can be caused by tight footwear, minor trauma caused by exercise, communal showers, and diseases that influence the immune system.

Treatment for fungal nails varies by the nature of the infection and the severity. A podiatrist can detect a fungal infection early and formulate a suitable treatment plan. This can include topical or oral medication, debridement, and in extreme cases, surgery. Trying to solve any nail infection without the help of a podiatrist can lead to more problems.

Haglund's Deformity

Another name for Haglund's Deformity is retrocalcaneal bursitis. The heel bone enlarges in the back area where the Achilles tendon attaches to the bone. This sometimes painful deformity generally is the result of bursitis caused by pressure against the shoe, and can be aggravated by the height or stitching of a heel counter of a particular shoe. Sometimes something as simple as changing your shoes can alleviate the symptoms.

Hammertoe

Hammertoe is a flexible or rigid contraction usually affecting the second, third, fourth, or fifth toe. In this condition, the toe is bent at the middle joint, resembling a hammer. Muscle imbalance leads to a bending or "buckling" of the toe joints. These buckled or contracted positions create any number of problems within and on top of the toe deformity. It is important to treat hammertoes early. As they advance and lose flexibility the only option for correction may be surgery. Hammertoes can cause complications such as corns or calluses at the point where they come into contact with the shoes. As with many foot problems one of the causes of hammertoes can be improperly fitted shoes.

Podiatrists have a variety of ways to treat hammertoes, including surgery, better shoes designed with extra room for toes, corn pads, straps, and cushions.

Metatarsalgia (foot pain in ball of your foot)

Metatarsalgia is foot pain in the ball of your foot which is the area between your arch and your toes. It gets its name because the pain experienced is located in the metatarsals located in this part of the foot.

In this condition one or more of the metatarsal joints becomes inflamed and possibly painful. People often develop a callus under the affected joint. There are many causes of Metatarsalgia including injuries, arthritis, poorly fitting shoes, and working on very hard surfaces. Sometimes changing your shoes will fix the problem. We may also recommend orthotics or implants.

Stress Fractures

An incomplete break in the bone caused by overuse is known as a stress fracture. Symptoms can include pain, swelling, and redness. Up to 15% of all sports injuries are stress fractures. A podiatrist needs to perform an examination and look at X-rays of the injury in order to diagnose a stress fracture. Treatments include immobilization of the foot with the use of a cast, medications, and in some cases orthotic devices to prevent further injury.

Sprains

An ankle sprain occurs by stretching or tearing one or more ligaments on either or both sides of the ankle. Ignoring a sprain won't help it heal any faster. Ankle injuries that are serious enough to cause disabling pain should be treated by a podiatrist. Further examination may even reveal a torn ligament or bone fracture. Common treatments for sprains include rest, elevation, compression, and ice. More serious sprains may call for crutches or other walking devices.

Warts

Warts are caused by a virus that generally enters the body through small nicks or abrasions in the skin. When they occur on the soles of the feet they are known as plantar warts. Due to the amount of pressure that is put on the feet in the course of a day, plantar warts can become

quite painful. Teenagers between the ages of 12—16 are most commonly infected by warts but they can occur at any age. Warts are often contracted by walking barefoot on dirty surfaces or ground. The virus thrives in warm, moist environments like showers and swimming pools.

If you suspect that you or a family member has a plantar wart, see a podiatrist to get a correct diagnosis and treatment plan. Treatments may include the use of a wart-removal preparation or CO2 laser cautery performed under local anesthesia to safely remove the wart.

Wounds and Ulcers

Foot ulcerations or open wounds are a condition where there is a breakdown in many layers of skin and tissue sometimes going all the way to the bone. They can be caused by pressure to a weight bearing point on the foot, but they can occur on top of the foot or between toes due to pressure from shoes or a bony spur. The risk of ulcer formation is higher in patients with decreased circulation or impaired blood supply to the legs and feet. Diabetics are prone to foot ulcerations, but they can be found in patients with high blood pressure, blood clots, varicose veins, and phlebitis as well.

Treatment for foot ulcerations varies according to the cause of the wound. The goal of the treatment is to close the wound from the inside out as quickly as possible. In cases where there is adequate circulation, debridement (removal of dead tissue) may be used around the edges and within the ulcer itself to promote healing. Other treatments include oral medications, compression, and bed rest. New advances have been made in wound care in recent years including the use of a platelet-derived growth factor as a way to promote healing. Podiatrists are trained to diagnose and treat all forms of foot and leg ulcerations.

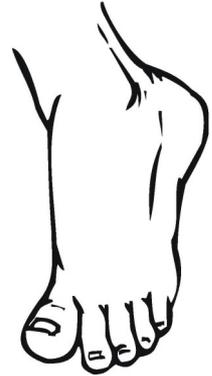
What Can You Do About Foot Pain?

The first step in dealing with foot pain is to care for your feet. Your feet are the hardest working part of your body. They carry you wherever you need to go, whenever you need to go there and they do it for years and years. In fact, during your lifetime you will have traveled on your feet

the equivalent of three trips around the entire world. You take, on average, 15,000 steps a day and will walk or run well over 75,000 miles in your lifetime. Caring for your precious feet and ankles is the best step to avoid foot pain and is a critical component in eliminating it as well.

Here are some steps you can take to keep your feet healthy and functioning:

First and foremost – do not ignore pain in your feet and ankles. Healthy feet don't have persistent pain or skin that looks unusual. If your pain doesn't subside quickly, please contact our office right away. The sooner we can see you and examine your feet, the quicker we can begin to make the corrections needed to get your feet healthy again. So often we see people who have waited a very long time and suffered needlessly – sometimes for years.



Try to develop a habit of always checking your feet. A great time to do this is right after a shower or during a bath. If you start a habit of carefully drying your feet after bathing (pay special attention to the skin between your toes) you can quickly check your feet to see if you notice any changes. If you see nails that look unusual you might be seeing a potential fungus developing. If your skin is broken, cracked or an unusual color you are noticing abnormalities. Finally, if your foot is changing shape or you observe new growth you should make an appointment to see us so we can treat these conditions before they progress and become worse.

If you have diabetes it is especially important to check your feet very regularly and often. In fact, we recommend that you have someone else help you check your feet, because you may not be able to see or, most importantly, feel problems. Early detection and treatment may avoid potentially serious complications later.

See a podiatrist if you have a problem with your feet. Treating yourself can often cause problems or exacerbate existing problems. If you are diabetic you are at greater risk for foot problems so be sure to make an

appointment to see us at least once a year. We'd love to see you. We are here to help!

When To Call a Podiatrist

Podiatrists are the experts on feet and ankles and should be the first doctor you call when you experience any of the symptoms or pains described in this book.

Podiatrists treat foot and ankle problems for patients of all ages. You should call a podiatrist when you have pain in your feet and ankles. If you notice that there is any change at all to your nails or the skin on your feet and ankles, you should see the "expert" on your feet.

If you have diabetes or poor circulation and you develop any abnormal symptoms you should see us immediately. You are at much greater risk for serious complications. And if you have diabetes you should see us at least once a year whether or not you have symptoms or pain. Regular check ups are a great way to help keep your feet and ankles healthy.

Most importantly, you should **call us first** when you have pain or any issue that affects your feet and ankles.

What To Do If You Are In Severe Pain

Pain is our body's way of telling us that something is wrong. And it usually is true that the more severe the pain, the more serious the problem. If you are experiencing severe foot pain, seek treatment from a podiatrist immediately. Podiatrists specialize in dealing with foot and ankle problems and are experts in helping treat your symptoms. You can reach our offices at:

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If you are experiencing an emergency, call 911.

Final Thoughts

I hope the information in this publication has been helpful. My purpose for sharing it with you is to give you the information you need to take the appropriate actions to care for your feet and ankles. I hope it helps you understand the pain you or your loved one may be experiencing. I also wrote it to help you see that podiatric medicine has benefited greatly from the advances medical science is making in the treatment of foot and ankle conditions.

I know that making an appointment to see a doctor isn't always the easiest thing to do, but with knowledge and understanding you can see that we podiatrists can offer you many treatments that can greatly improve the quality of your life.

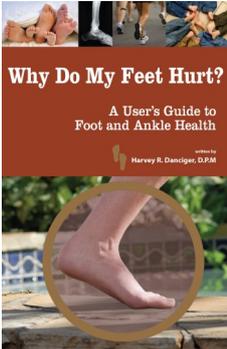
Dedicated to Your Health,

Dr. Harvey R. Danciger

Dr. Harvey R. Danciger

Free Copy of

Why Do My Feet Hurt? A User's Guide to Foot and Ankle Health



If you have any friends or family members who might benefit from the information provided in this book, we would be happy to provide them with their own copy free of charge. Just tell them to call us at 1-888-400-3670 or visit our website at www.CoachellaValleyPodiatrist.com to request it online OR return this form.

There is no need to destroy this book. Just photocopy this form, give it to your friend and tell them to mail it or fax it to us. Fax (760) 568-5110 or mail to 74
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