



Department of
Health



STAY ON YOUR FEET[®]

Move

Improve

Remove

HEALTHY FOOT GUIDE



Visit www.stayonyourfeet.com.au or call 1300 30 35 40

The Stay On Your Feet® program, funded through the WA Department of Health, provides information, training and support to older adult community members and professionals working with older adults on how to prevent falls in the community.

Injury Matters acknowledges the contribution made to this resource by the Moorditj Djena Aboriginal Community Health Team.



FALLS ARE PREVENTABLE

As we age, our feet change and lose some feeling and flexibility. This changes the way we walk and affects our balance, increasing the risk of falls. The good news is there are steps we can take to look after our feet and help prevent falls.

LOOKING AFTER YOUR FEET

While many factors can cause a fall, everyone can take steps to reduce their risk by minimising or even eliminating foot pain. Doing so will improve balance, coordination and stability when walking or standing.

You can keep your feet healthy as you age through proper maintenance, care and regular check-ups with your podiatrist (foot doctor) at least once a year.





FOOT HEALTH PROBLEMS

Foot health problems can cause pain, making it hard to walk and balance. Bone deformities, such as bunions and arthritis, can lead to problems like pain, corns and calluses.

Foot health problems can also result from more serious medical conditions such as diabetes, osteoarthritis, peripheral vascular disease (poor circulation) and peripheral neuropathy (loss of sensation). Poor blood circulation and damage to the nerves in the feet makes it hard to notice injuries such as cuts, sores and blisters. Daily care can prevent serious complications and decrease the risk of falls.

TIPS TO LOOK AFTER YOUR FEET



Wash your feet with lukewarm water and soap daily.



Dry your feet well, and don't forget to dry in between the toes to prevent fungus, also known as Tinea or Athlete's Foot, which loves to grow in warm/moist environments.

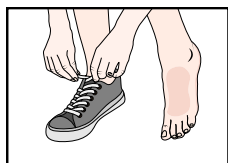


Moisturise your feet daily, but not between the toes. Try moisturising before bed, wear socks and let it soak in overnight while you are asleep. Avoid walking on floors or tiles with socks to prevent falls.



Keep your toenails short, but not too short.

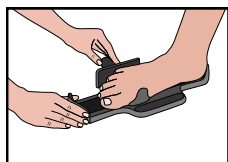
If you can trim your toenails yourself, make sure you trim them straight across and be careful not to cut your skin. If you have diabetes, poor circulation, or heart problems, seek help from a podiatrist as you are at a higher risk for infection.



Protect your feet. Don't walk on hot road surfaces or sand without safe footwear. Avoid thongs, make sure your shoes fit well and aren't rubbing on your foot.



Keep your feet away from direct heat and avoid sitting too close to campfires, electric blankets, fireplaces, and heaters.



Where possible ask for your feet to be measured when buying shoes. If you have been supplied special footwear by a podiatrist, ensure this is the only footwear you wear.



Have regular foot check ups with a podiatrist. A podiatrist can also recommend exercises that strengthen muscles in the feet to reduce your risk of falls.



CHECK YOUR FEET

Look and feel for changes to your feet such as cuts, cracks, blisters, bruising, dryness, redness and swelling. If you have poor eyesight or find it hard to bend down, use a mirror to help check your feet or ask your family to help.

When should you check your feet?

- ✓ Before you put on your socks and shoes
- ✓ After you take off your socks and shoes
- ✓ After you take a bath or shower
- ✓ At regular intervals throughout the day

COMMON FOOT PROBLEMS

Ingrown toenails

This is more common in older adults as the nail gets thicker with age and grows into the skin around the nail. An ingrown toenail can become painful and inflamed, which if left untreated can lead to infection.



Corns and calluses

Corns and calluses form on the dead outer layer of the skin. The skin becomes thick due to pressure or friction, usually from unsafe footwear, such as thongs.

Ulcers

An ulcer is an open wound or sore that does not heal or keeps returning. Ulcers often occur on the ball of the foot or on the bottom of the big toe. Neglecting ulcers can result in infections, which in turn can lead to amputation.



Blisters

A blister is a small pocket of fluid in the upper skin layers and is a common response to injury or rubbing. Avoid popping or draining a blister as this could lead to infection. If a blister becomes discolored, inflamed, worsens, or does not heal after a few days, speak to your GP or podiatrist.



Bunions

A bunion is a bony bump that forms on the joint at the bottom of your big toe. Bunions can occur when your feet change shape, causing skin damage and foot pain. Wearing tight, narrow shoes might cause bunions or make them worse.



Tinea

Also known as “athlete’s foot”, Tinea is a common contagious skin infection on the feet. Like other skin infections and conditions, itchy, irritated or broken skin can lead to blistering and infections.



WHO CAN HELP?

- See your GP immediately if you have any concerns about your foot health.
- See your GP if you have a chronic disease. Your GP can refer you to a podiatrist under the Chronic Disease Management (CDM) Program. This Program is for up to five subsidised treatments under Medicare.
- Podiatry Western Australia and the Australian Podiatry Association have several resources on looking after ageing feet and correct footwear.
- Moorditj Djena “Strong Feet” is a Podiatry and diabetes education program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Perth metropolitan area.
- Diabetes WA has a range of resources and information on how to look after your feet as well as a range of education programs and support services for people living with diabetes.

MY ACTION PLAN

Things I need to do

Get my feet checked

[illegible]



To order this and other free Stay On Your Feet® resources
visit www.injurymattersquickmail.com.au

For more information on how to prevent slips, trips and falls
visit www.stayonyourfeet.com.au

Email: info@stayonyourfeet.com.au

Phone: 1300 30 35 40