

Show off your feet!

Your feet are one of your most precious assets – so make sure they look their best this summer. Read on to find out how to make sure you strut your stuff with style

WORDS: VICTORIA GOLDMAN

Feet are one of the most neglected parts of the body. Yet as soon as the temperature rises, most people want to put them out on display. Clearly your feet are vital for getting you out and about – so it's essential to look after them properly.

Wearing shoes that don't fit, walking on hard surfaces or even just standing for too long can all take their toll. According to the Standards of Care document for the Podiatry Rheumatic Care Association, nearly a quarter of people with arthritis have corns and calluses, and 17 per cent have foot ulcers.

So how can you make sure your feet are looking their best this summer? And what shoes and sandals should you be wearing to limit any discomfort?

Treat your feet

Giving your feet regular attention has long-lasting benefits. But seek advice from your doctor or a podiatrist (chiropodist) if you are prone to circulatory problems or foot ulcers, or are taking steroid tablets.

Wash your feet every day in warm soapy water and dry them thoroughly, especially between the toes to reduce

the risk of athlete's foot (a common fungal infection). If bending down is difficult, use a long-handled brush to wash your feet and a hairdryer to dry them off.

Gently use a pumice stone, emery board or foot file to keep hard skin at bay and apply moisturiser. Cut your toe nails straight across every six to eight weeks. If you have painful hands, try using a long-handled foot file instead.

Be foot aware

Exposing your feet in warm weather leaves them vulnerable to irritation and injury. Some medicines for inflammatory arthritis (for example, methotrexate or biologic drugs) can leave you prone to skin infections. 'Check your feet regularly, or get someone else to do it for you if you find this difficult, and seek professional advice if you experience any problems,' says Robert Field, Dorset podiatrist and chair of the Podiatry Rheumatic Care Association. 'Don't forget to cover your feet with sunscreen if you're wearing sandals, as some arthritis medicines [for example, methotrexate] can make you more susceptible to sunburn.'

Never ignore minor foot troubles.

Pain and soreness can affect how you walk, which may lead to serious foot problems and make other symptoms – such as back pain – worse. Arthritis can make you more prone to corns and calluses (areas of hard thickened skin), especially if your feet are swollen or inflamed and rub against shoes.

Occasionally corns and calluses can develop into an ulcer or become infected. Don't use corn treatments yourself, as these can damage your skin; consult a podiatrist instead.

Shoe choices

Comfort should be your priority. Many shoe shops have experienced fitters, and some online retailers stock shoes with extra width or depth. If your feet are painful, swollen or very wide, or you have a hammer toe or bunion, however, you may need to seek professional help to find the right fit.

Women are more prone to foot problems than men. The College of Podiatry advises keeping heel heights to around 4cm for everyday use or 2cm if you are on your feet all day. If you do wear high heels, save them for special occasions. Don't wear low flat ballet pumps either; these encourage your feet to roll in and may lead to ankle and knee problems.

Field recommends wearing trainers with good shock absorption if you are walking around. 'Sandals may be useful for people with pressure problems on the toes, but they need to have a good heel and strap to hold the foot in,' he says. 'A lot of people

with arthritis find plastic clogs very comfortable, as these are lightweight, but they don't give good joint protection. Flips-flops aren't great either, but are fine for a short while on the beach.'

Some people with arthritis find that rocker-soled or 'unstable' footwear

reduces the pressure on their feet, but the research is conflicting. A study at Kings College London, published in the medical journal *Spine*, found that rocker-soled shoes had no significant impact on lower back pain. 'Rocker soles may reduce wear and tear on the feet as the movement comes



from the sole and not the joints,' says consultant podiatrist Mike O'Neill. 'These can help some people as part of their overall arthritis management programme, but won't prevent pain.'

Try shoe inserts

If you are prone to foot pain, a podiatrist may recommend orthotics, which are specialist shoe inserts that provide support and cushioning. According to research at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, published in the medical journal *Foot*, orthotics can help foot pain and possibly joint inflammation in people with rheumatoid arthritis.

Dr Anita Williams, senior lecturer in orthotics and podiatry at the University of Salford, says that orthotics may influence your choice of footwear. 'Orthotics can only be as good as the shoes that they are put in,' she says. 'For these to be fully effective and stay in place within the footwear, sandals are not the ideal choice.'

Keep fit

Exercise tones your muscles, keeps your joints moving and helps you stay at a healthy weight. Swimming is an excellent choice, as it doesn't put pressure on your joints. The lighter you are on your feet, the better.

Field says it's important to see foot health as part of your wider wellbeing. 'Stop smoking, check your diet and cholesterol levels and, if you can, exercise regularly,' he says.

Consult a podiatrist

If you have problems looking after your feet, your doctor can refer you to a podiatrist, who will check for nail problems, foot infections and hard skin. If you have rheumatoid arthritis, you should have your feet checked every year. The College of Podiatry can help you find your nearest registered chiropodist/podiatrist – call 020 7234 8620 or visit www.spod.org

WWW / SHUTTERSTOCK

Optiflex®

40% MORE glucosamine*

Healthspan's Optiflex® Glucosamine Hydrochloride (HCl) is the premium, most advanced form of glucosamine available, providing 40% MORE pure glucosamine per gram than standard glucosamine sulphate 2KCl.



120 capsules
£13.95

160 tablets
£7.45

120 tablets
£9.95

- ✓ Purest most advanced form of glucosamine HCl
- ✓ Produced from a sustainable corn based source
- ✓ 100% free from shellfish
- ✓ Suitable for vegetarians and vegans

"Glucosamine occurs naturally in the joints and is a component of joint cartilage"

Dr Hilary Jones

GP and Medical Advisor to Healthspan



*40% more glucosamine per gram than standard glucosamine sulphate 2KCl.

Arthritis Care Discount
£2 off your order when you spend over £15!

Please quote code when ordering
Offer expires 31.07.14.

AC-XJN

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS

Post to: Healthspan Ltd, PO Box 64, Guernsey GY1 3BT.

Please make cheques/PO payable to 'Healthspan'

Name (Mr, Mrs, Ms): _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____

Post code: _____

Please debit my Credit / Debit card

Issue No/Start date: _____

Expiry date: _____

Security (CV2[®]) code: _____

Card No:

*Last 3 digits on the back of your card

OVER 150 GOLD STANDARD SUPPLEMENTS

	Price	Qty	Total (£)
Optiflex Glucosamine 1,000mg	160 tabs	£7.45	
Fast Release Glucosamine 70 Plus	120 caps	£13.95	
Optiflex Glucosamine & Chondroitin	120 tabs	£9.95	
Cod Liver Oil 1,000mg	120 caps	£5.95	
MultiVitality 50 Plus	180 tabs	£10.95	
Omega 3 - 1,000mg	120 caps	£6.95	
Vitamin B Complex - High Strength	120 tabs	£7.95	
Subtotal			
MY ORDER IS OVER £15 - PLEASE DEDUCT £2			-£2.00
HEALTHSPAN CUSTOMER DISCOUNT £2.60			-£2.60
Standard P&P provided to you by PostDirect			£2.60
Total £			

Healthspan

NUTRITION FOR A HEALTHY LIFESPAN

EXCLUSIVELY AVAILABLE DIRECT FROM:
www.healthspan.co.uk FREEPHONE 0800 73 123 77

All Healthspan Ltd sales with standard delivery service are provided to you by PostDirect at a price of £2.60 incl. VAT. Please allow up to 10 days for delivery. By completing this form you are agreeing to PostDirect's terms and conditions of delivery. Express delivery services are available to you by PostDirect at a cost of £19.95 incl. VAT. All product prices shown include VAT. Full details are contained in the terms and conditions at www.healthspan.co.uk. Our customer charter provides a no-quibble refund on products and guarantees that your personal data will not be passed on to third parties. Prices and voucher valid until 31.07.14. Single use only and not to be used in conjunction with any other offer. £2 off orders over £15. Healthspan Ltd, PO Box 64, Guernsey, GY1 3BT. Over the course of the next few months we are upgrading our packaging. As such, please be assured that although the product pack you receive may look different to that advertised, it is the same premium formulation inside. If you do not wish to receive future product updates, please tick this box.