

# THE FOOT & ANKLE SURGEON



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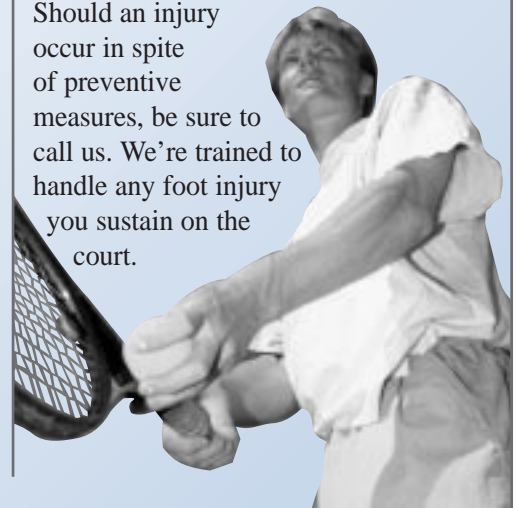
## *Court sports can be hard on feet*

Whether your sport is tennis, squash, racquetball, or badminton, the injuries that most often result are pretty much the same. Tennis toe, plantar fasciitis, ankle sprains, and stress fractures are all common.

Court sports are good for you. They provide an excellent workout, and they are a fun way to stay in shape. However, because many of the muscles used in these sports don't get much exercise off the court, it's easy to sustain an injury during play. A few things you can do to prevent problems include buying sport-specific shoes that fit well to keep feet from sliding from side to side within the shoes. In addition, always wear socks, stretch before and after playing in order to avoid injuries, and spend some time getting used to the court before a game.

Don't continue to play through pain, and don't ignore a persistent ache. Problems such as pronation can be diagnosed and treated to prevent further discomfort. Learning proper nail care from a professional can help as well.

Should an injury occur in spite of preventive measures, be sure to call us. We're trained to handle any foot injury you sustain on the court.



## *Relief for bunion pain*

If you want long-term relief from bunion pain, surgery is the step to take. Recent studies found that conservative measures provide some relief, but those who undergo surgical correction seem to experience longer-lasting benefits.

New surgical techniques for bunions include minimally-invasive surgical techniques performed through tiny incisions on an outpatient basis in the doctor's office. This technique has been shown to work well to maintain the proper alignment. In addition, patients experience only minimal discomfort and recover quickly.

Bunions, also known as hallux valgus, affect women nearly ten times more often than men. They cause the joint near the big toe to become inflamed and painful. Eventually, the big toe bends toward the other toes. When the pain caused by the bunion interferes with the quality of the patient's life, it's time to consider surgical correction.

If you have bunions, we'd like to help relieve any discomfort they cause you. There are conservative treatments, such as orthotics, that can help to alleviate pain and make walking more comfortable. However, when conservative approaches have been exhausted, we can give you the information you need to make a decision concerning surgical correction and longer-lasting relief.

**Thank you for all your referrals. We appreciate them!**

## Ease your arthritis pain

Two of your biggest allies in the fight against arthritis pain are heat and cold. Since both of these are readily available for use at home, we think some guidelines are in order on how to use them to relieve discomfort.

### COLD

Brrrrr! The idea of using cold items on inflamed joints may not be instantly appealing. However, the idea behind using cold for arthritis is to dull pain—especially during arthritic flare-ups. Treat the painful joint with mineral oil and put a damp towel against your skin before applying cold. Then use a freezer pack wrapped in a dry towel for 15 to 20 minutes. Repeat this treatment as necessary.

### HOT

Ahhh, the feeling of warmth. Heat can help to relax your muscles and increase your circulation. A warm-water soak can relieve arthritic pain in your feet when you first get up in the morning. Heating pads and commercial hot packs that can be warmed up in the microwave may be effective as well. However, be sure to put dry towels between your skin and the heat source, and check your skin for blotches or other signs that you're applying too much heat.

Arthritis in your feet can be very uncomfortable, especially when first arising in the morning. In addition to using hot and cold to relieve pain, we can recommend treatments that will help keep you on your feet.

## Time heals all ankles

Not giving a seriously sprained ankle the proper time to heal can increase the likelihood of reinjuring it. Rest and sticking to a rehabilitation schedule will usually garner the best results.



### Step one

Whenever you sprain an ankle, give us a call. We'll ask questions to help determine whether we need to examine you. Professional intervention is often necessary to determine the extent of the injury and what course of treatment should be followed for a complete recovery.

### Step two

Generally, if it's a severe sprain, we recommend that patients follow the RICE format: rest, ice, and elevating the injured ankle. If the situation calls for it, we may recommend a brace to support the ankle while it heals. RICE treatment should continue for about a week.

### Step three

As you recover, spend some time each day stretching your foot muscles. Stretching your calf muscles and walking on your toes and heels are all good ways to help keep your muscles from atrophying as you begin to use your foot again.

### Step four

After about a month, you will be ready to start strengthening your ankle. Rotate it gently and balance on it until you feel comfortable hopping on it. At ten weeks after your injury, you should be able to start working out again at a reduced intensity. If this isn't the case, call us for a closer look at the situation.

## Foot find word puzzle

See if you can find all the foot-related words listed below.

Achilles heel	Insole
Feet	Podiatrist
Nail	Walking
Tendon	Bursa
Ankle	Ligament
Gait	Shoes
Plantar	Cuticle
Toes	Matrix
Arch	Socks

A S B C L E E H S E L L I H C A N I G M P S S T D R  
W C S O M Y F T L I S S K C O S T C E F R E P D R O  
A L E L C I T U C Y O U R B R T H Y A D G I L L S Q  
L H E D I S R A F E E T E H T R E B M E T P O M N W  
K I N D A T H R U S P U M K I N S U Y R T O E S X Z  
I T S X S E C H N O L O G W A T E R L A S E U S E D  
N S E K U R T Z S A T I X I U S A A S H T S A T S U  
G J L N S H O E S C O W M A T R I X R O O S C H I C  
A S R U D N O D N E T C A L T R A E T Y O S N A I L  
E R S E L O P O D G L G I S U I S J E M I L I E A I  
L K C B Q R N T I A A A S R U B H J K M N O P L A N  
K S A B U L S N A T E I Q P O D I A T R I S T P O X  
N E C T O M Y S P U R T U S A R C H U N I T E F O R  
A I N S O L E W W T N E M A G I L R E M E M B E P N  
P Q W E R T Y O P M N B V U D S A P L A N T A R M T

# Summertime is foot-care time

In the summer, feet require extra care. Because you are barefoot more often—both indoors and out—feet are more likely to suffer from injuries, exposure to heat, and other problems. Here are some tips you can take to the beach or other places you head this summer where you feel compelled to bare your tootsies.

## Cover up

Yes, it's great to go barefoot, but you should avoid it unless it's absolutely safe. Here are some cover-ups that can help you protect your feet:

- Wear sandals or aqua shoes on the beach and around the pool to shield the bottoms of your feet from hot sand or pavement. Aqua shoes are great in the ocean, a lake, or a river because they can protect you from unseen objects.
- Cover your feet with sunscreen when you plan to be out in the sun. The tops of feet often go unprotected and suffer severe sunburn because of it.
- Choose the right shoes for the activity you intend to do. If you plan to be walking a long distance, wear sturdy shoes that won't cause blisters. And don't skip the socks just because the weather is warmer. Also, changing shoes daily will allow them to dry out, thus avoiding problems with odor.



effectively reduced by daily cleansing, using talcum powder, and changing socks and shoes regularly. Shoes made of natural materials, which allow the skin to breathe, are generally better than those made of manmade materials, which give bacteria a better chance to grow.

- Heal those heels by avoiding shoes that expose them. Some sandals and slingbacks allow the heels to hang over the backs of the shoes, resulting in calluses and dry skin in that area. Daily treatment with moisturizer, lanolin, or urea provides protection and moisture for skin.

- The best way to avoid problems with blisters is to prevent them from forming. Most pharmacies carry moleskin or other materials that can be applied to help ward off blisters. Wearing socks and shoes made of natural materials can also help. If you feel pain in an area that is rubbing, stop what you're doing before a blister develops.

## For athletes only

If you're an athlete, summer can be the most enjoyable time to work out. However, extra caution needs to be taken to avoid injury during this busy season. Pay special attention to the terrain on which you're walking, running, or playing. Uneven surfaces and sandy areas can be especially dangerous. Be sure to wear the right shoes for whatever activity you're undertaking in order to provide the necessary support and protection for your feet.

Summer can be a very enjoyable time. Don't let a foot injury, blister, or other problem slow you down. If you do experience a foot ailment, call us for the help you need to keep you moving during the sunny season.

## Fight summer foot problems

Some foot problems are compounded by the summer weather. Sweating and odor, blisters, and cracking of the heels are among the most common. Each of these problems requires a different approach.

- Sweat and odor cannot be cured, but the problem can be

## Diabetic neuropathy update

Diabetes causes abnormally high blood sugar levels, due to a lack of insulin. When this happens, the glucose (blood sugar) can invade nerve tissues and cause damage. This nerve damage is permanent and cannot be reversed. It can, however, be controlled.

The damage caused by diabetic neuropathy often begins with numbness in the feet. Patients slowly lose their ability to differentiate between sensations such as sharp versus dull or hot versus cold. Sometimes there is a burning sensation in the feet—especially at night.

Once this occurs, the patient may be in danger of infections from small cuts that he or she doesn't even know exist. Foot problems, such as ingrown nails, corns, or calluses, are serious concerns. Professional treatment should be sought for any of these problems to help avoid infection. People with diabetic neuropathy should check their shoes for foreign objects and avoid walking barefoot.

Peripheral neuropathy is sometimes treated with medications that help relieve symptoms. Regular, professional podiatric treatment is a necessity to keep feet in their best condition.



**Center for Advanced Foot & Ankle Surgery**

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*Here's your foot care newsletter!*

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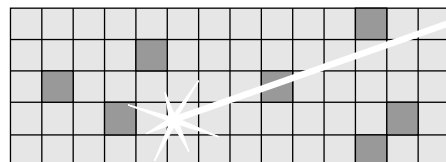
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## Lasers—Today's high-tech surgery

It may sound like science fiction, but it's now possible to perform some podiatric surgery using lasers—amplified beams of light. These high-tech wonders can be used to treat foot problems that involve soft tissues.

The highly concentrated energy of the light beam penetrates the tissue and is absorbed by water, which constitutes 85 percent of most living tissue. It's then converted into heat, which evaporates the cellular water. The procedure is suited for the removal of warts, pinched nerves, calluses, scars and scar tissue, and ingrown nails. It can't be used for bunions, since bunions are a bone deformity, and lasers can't cut bone.

There are a number of advantages in using lasers. The surgeon is able to achieve pinpoint precision because the beam of light is so small. And since the laser cauterizes the surrounding blood vessels and tissue, there is minimal bleeding during surgery.



## Treating neuromas with the laser

A *neuroma* is a painful irritation that generally occurs between the third and fourth toes. The nerve is pinched by the metatarsals, causing inflammation. The body produces a lump to protect itself from this pressure. The major symptom of a neuroma is pain, which can become intense. You won't see anything wrong.

We can treat a neuroma with a laser. The operation requires a small incision. Part of the affected nerve is then cauterized with the laser, and the nerve endings are sealed so they can heal properly.

We recommend laser treatment for this problem because the foot usually heals quickly and because there's a minimum of swelling and pain. Also, the affected area is not likely to become infected.

You may have some numbness immediately following the operation, but this will not affect your activities. Eventually the numbness goes away.

If pain in this area of your foot makes you suspect you have a neuroma, see us. We will diagnose your problem and, if it is needed, use laser technology to speed your recovery.