



When Good feet *go bad*



	What it is	Why you get it	Treatment	Prevention
Achilles Tendonitis	An inflammation of the Achilles tendon, which connects your calf muscles to the backs of your heels. Causes heel pain when you walk or run. Skin may be swollen and warm.	Overuse, arthritis, or injury. Other culprits: shoes that dig into the area just above the heels, high heels that shorten the tendon, and flats that stretch out the tendon.	Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medication. Rest. Stretching and icing calf muscles. In serious cases, a cast or surgery may be needed.	Avoid ill-fitting shoes and the overuse of high heels and super low shoes. Stretch the Achilles tendon regularly.
Athlete's Foot	A fungal infection that causes dry, scaly, itchy skin, in addition to inflammation and blisters. May spread to the toenails and even the groin and underarms.	The fungus thrives in moist locker rooms, pool areas, showers; it's even on carpets. Go barefoot, and you're fair game, particularly if you are genetically predisposed to fungal infections.	Topical antifungal creams; start with an over the counter version, and ask a doctor for prescription strength, if it's needed.	Wear flip flops in public areas. Choose shoes that breathe. Change shoes and socks daily. Wash and carefully dry feet everyday. Use an antifungal foot powder.
Blister	A pocket of raised skin filled with fluid.	This irritation is caused by skin rubbing against a sock or shoe. Wet socks are a frequent culprit.	If blister's intact, leave alone or cover it with a sift dressing. Need to pop it for relief? Use a sterile needle to make a small opening on the side; apply antibiotic ointment and cover.	Avoid tight shoes. Wear moisture wicking socks to minimize friction.
Bunion	A problem that occurs when the bone at the base of the big toe shifts and the big toe moves toward the other toes. A painful bump may form on the outside of the bone.	Mostly because of faulty foot biomechanics that are inherited. Narrow shoes with a small toe box can irritate and worsen the bunion, but usually are not the primary cause.	Pads. Orthotics to realign the feet. Anti inflammatory medication. Cortisone injections. Physical therapy. Wider shoes. Surgical removal is a last resort	Wear shoes with a wide toe box and low heels. If you have flat feet, consider orthotics.
Corns and Calluses	Thickened tissue caused by pressure. Corns typically are small and on the tops or sides of toes. A callus is a larger patch of thick skin on the bottom of feet; it doesn't hurt, but skin feels rough.	Wearing shoes that are too tight or have too high of heel, both of which push toes against each other causing feet to rub against socks or the sides or bottoms of shoes.	Gently rub corns and calluses with a pumice stone after bathing to remove tough skin. A podiatrist can remove a painful corn with a scalpel	Wear wide shoes. Use OTC pads to keep toes apart and to cushion the shoes of your feet. Moisturize heels and other callus prone areas regularly.
Hammertoe	A condition that occurs when toes bend up at the joint (from the side, the toe resembles as upside down V). Common in the second through fifth toe.	A genetic roll of the dice. Also, blame narrow shoes that squeeze toes together. More common in people with certain foot structures, such as high arches.	Padding. Taping to take pressure off the toe. Anti inflammatory medication. Cortisone injections. Orthotics. In severe cases, surgery may be considered.	Avoid tight, pointy shoes and high heels.
Ingrown toenail	A piece of a toenail that digs into the skin.	Can be caused by toenails that are too long or aren't clipped properly. Other culprits: wearing tight shoes (that push toes together and having an abnormal foot structure.	If you can't remove the nail by cutting it, see a podiatrist.	Wear wider shoes. Cut toenails straight across and keep them short; they shouldn't extend much beyond your toes.
Neuroma	Basically, a pinched nerve between the third and fourth toes that enlarges. Inflamed, it can cause pain, burning, numbness, and tingling in the front of the foot.	Wearing narrow shoes and high heels puts pressure on toes.	Prescription orthotics (they shift weight away from the neuroma). Cortisone injections. Surgical release or removal.	Wear shoes with wide toe box. Stick with heels less than 2 inches high.
Plantar Fasciitis	A painful condition that occurs when the band of tissue along the bottom of the foot (plantar fascia) gets overstretched and becomes inflamed. A classic symptom: pain upon taking first steps of the day.	Bad biomechanics can stress the heel. Also can be caused by jumping and running a lot, and wearing shoes without arch support. People with flat feet are most at risk.	Night splints, othotics, non steroidal anti inflammatory medication, stretching, corticisone injections, casting, shoes with extra support, even shock-wave therapy.	Wear shoes with proper arch support; ballet flats can stretch the plantar fascia, as can worn-out workout shoes.
Plantar Warts	A viral infection that causes painful warts on the bottoms of feet. Caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV).	A virus loves warm, moist areas, so going barefoot in public places is the main culprit.	An OTC salicylic acid plaster combined with filing the wart down each night. Other remedies: liquid nitrogen, laser therapy, topical prescription cream, surgical removal.	Wear shoes in public areas and outdoors.
Pump Bump	A bump on the back of the heel bone. Also called Haglund's deformity.	When the stiff backs of high heels rub against the heel. The friction can inflame the bursa, a fluid filled sac between the tendon and bone triggering bursitis.	Anti inflammatory medicine, ice, heel lifts or pads, orthotics and rest ease inflammation. Backless shoes help too, as can stretching the Achilles tendon.	Avoid high heels. If you think you are developing a bump, try orthotics or stretching exercises.
Smelly Feet	You can't miss it.	Feet have more than 250,000 sweat glands and area breeding ground for odor causing bacteria. Other causes: shoes or socks that don't breathe, wearing the same shoes, going sock less.	Good hygiene helps. Severe cases may respond to aluminum chloride, which decreases sweat gland production: apply to feet at night and wash off in the morning.	Wash feet every day and dry thoroughly with a towel. If they still smell, dry them with a hair dryer. Wear shoes and clean socks that breathe. Change shoes daily.
Toenail Fungus	Thick, discolored, and even foul smelling nails.	The organisms that cause fungus love warm, moist areas. And some people are genetically prone to infection. If you have toenail fungus, you're a shoo-in for athlete's foot.	Prescription oral antifungal medication, usually for about three months. Surgical removal of the nail may be necessary	Wear flip flops in public areas. Choose shoes that breathe. Change shoes and socks daily. Wash and carefully dry feet every day. Use an antifungal foot powder.

10 Commandments of shoe shopping:

1. Buy for your bigger foot. Most people have two slightly different size feet. If there's extra room in the shoe on your smaller foot, compensate with an over the counter insert.
2. Get remeasured as you age. Your foot size at age 20 is not necessarily going to be your foot size at age 30. If you have kids or gain or lose weight, your foot size may change.
3. Don't forget to wiggle. You need some wiggle room between the tip of your longest toe and the top of the shoe.
4. Do the bend test. If you hold the heel of the shoe in one hand and the toe in the other and twist, the shoe shouldn't bend. That way your foot's natural curve is more likely to be supported.
5. Shop at days' end. That's when your feet are largest due to swelling.
6. Wear the right socks or stockings. That means bring sports socks with you if you are shopping for running shoes, and slip into nylons if you are buying dressier shoes.
7. Test the shoe padding. Walk on an uncarpeted floor to get a feel for how much padding the shoe has.
8. Don't expect shoes to stretch. Either a shoe fits or it doesn't. Man made materials won't stretch.
9. Let fit, not size be your guide. A size 8 in one style shoe may not be the same as a size 8 in another style. Use your heel as a guide. It should not feel tight against the shoe.
10. Go for variety (i.e., heel, height, style and fit) so you can rotate them, which reduces the risk of developing a shoe related foot problem. Shoes below a heel height of 2 inches are less likely to change your gait., put pressure on the knee or stretch your Achilles tendon.