

Love Your Feet!

August 1, 2023

August 17th is National Love My Feet Day. This holiday's founder, Carolyn Jenkins, realized that as a whole, we tend not to be aware of all the work our feet do and the importance of taking care of them by attending to their health. Take a moment to recognize the impacts of problems with your feet. After all, the feet are the support and foundation of the entire body. We need them to be ambulatory, to get from one place to another. Our feet are also important for balance, posture and even just standing upright. Problems with our feet means that we are less likely to participate in physical activity. Lack of exercise can then lead to even more serious health issues like heart disease and diabetes. This should be concerning news to the 3/4 of our population that have foot problems.

So how do foot problems get started and what can we do to prevent them? The most common start to foot problems is bad footwear. Not only is well-made footwear critical but even more important is wearing the correct shoe size. Most people either wear shoes that are too small or too large. One thing that can help with this situation is to shop for your shoes at night when your feet are at their largest.

The following are more tips to help you love your feet.

- Find the proper balance between getting enough rest for your feet and exercise to maintain muscle flexibility.
- Your feet have upwards of 200,000 sweat glands. Let your shoes dry out completely before wearing them again. Consider alternating footwear to help. (Hmmm, did I hear a legitimate excuse for multiple pairs of shoes?)
- Keep your feet clean. And when you are done washing, take the time to dry between your toes. This is a favorite moist place for fungal infections to grow.
- Wearing sandals and going barefoot in hot weather can create the opposite problem and dry your skin out. This can cause cracking and fissures making it easier for infections to start. Moisturize and hydrate your feet as needed.

- Regularly clean your toenails and cut them straight across to prevent ingrown toenails.

- Don't ignore foot pain. Have any persistent pain checked out by a podiatrist and handle the situation before it gets worse.

- Consider regular pedicures. There are so many reasons why pedicures are great self-care other than visibly attractive feet and nails. Some of which include having a professional be able to spot early signs of problems, prevention of problems, increased blood flow and circulation and removal of calluses which can cause pain and adversely affect balance. For more on the benefits of pedicures, see our August 2021 blog.

One last topic to touch upon in regards to foot health is something most of us have at least heard of, Reflexology. The Oxford Language Dictionary defines Reflexology as "a system of massage used to relieve tension and treat illness based on the theory that there are reflex points on the feet, hands and head linked to every part of the body." You can easily find Reflexology renderings of the feet which map out which part of each foot is linked to which organ or system in the body. For instance, if you want to stimulate your lymphatic system, then you would massage the tops of your feet. So according to this alternative medical practice, one could love one's feet by massaging them and positively impact one's whole body at the same time!

"Keep your eyes on the stars, and your feet on the ground." - Theodore Roosevelt

"The place where you made your stand never mattered. Only that you were there and still on your feet." - Stephen King

"Making the most of each moment and ridding ourselves of the toxic habit of constantly looking forward to the next thing. Be where your feet are."
- Scott M. O'Neill

"The human foot is a masterpiece of engineering and a work of art."
- Leonardo da Vinci

"Think of the magic of the foot, comparatively small, upon which your whole weight rests. It's a miracle, and the dance is a celebration of that miracle."
- Martha Graham

"I still have my feet on the ground, I just wear better shoes." - Oprah Winfrey