

NORTH AUSTIN

FOOT & ANKLE

I N S T I T U T E

News and Updates

October 2019



Tips on Moisturizing Your Feet

A dryer climate can hit as we head into winter, and for some people that can mean havoc to their feet. From simple rough patches to painful cracked heels, a lack of moisture in the feet can be quite uncomfortable.

If dry, uncomfortable feet is a problem you currently have, or know you tend to get depending on the season, a good moisturizing routine now can be of significant help.

The best kind of moisturizing habit is one you will be happy to do consistently. That means finding a time that works best for you and lotions that won't make you gag. Moisturizing is something everyone can do, and there are products out there that will work for all different types.

Here are some tips for effective moisturizing:

- **Get plenty of water.** Let's start off with something that doesn't even involve rubbing stuff onto your feet! Keeping yourself hydrated internally contributes to better skin externally. You don't have to drown yourself at the drinking fountain but maintain consistent intake throughout the day.
- **Set a steady time.** Moisturize when there are few barriers to your doing so. This can be when you get out of the shower, or right before heading to bed, when you're barefoot, anyway. After-shower moisturizing has the added benefit of your skin being more receptive.
- **Throttle the hot showers.** Speaking of showers, keeping yourself in steaming hot water for too long can actually dry your feet out over time. Turn down the temperature of the water or keep a short leash on your bath time.
- **Consider overnight moisturizing.** Using moisturizer just before bed and slipping into some comfy old socks can let things work overnight. You could also use petroleum jelly overnight in a similar manner.

If you would like more help with dry, rough feet, let us know. We can point you in the right direction toward effective treatments.





Preventing Plantar Warts is Not a Scary Proposition

Warts tend to get mixed in somewhat with a spooky season. Witches tend to have them, after all, and some of the superstitious “cures” mentioned in famous literature involve dead cats and graveyards.

But plantar warts (the kind that appear on your feet) are far from scary, nor do they come from any dark arts. The cause of plantar warts (and all other warts) is far more mundane: a virus that gets beneath the skin.

If you want to reduce your chances of picking up plantar warts, there are some simple ways you and your family can do so.

- Wash your feet every day and dry them well.
- Avoid touching warts—either other people’s or any you may have elsewhere on your body. If you have to touch one, wash your hands immediately afterward. Picking at or scratching warts can also be a bad habit and should be avoided whenever possible.
- Avoid walking barefoot around swimming pools, locker rooms, and other warm, moist areas that receive a lot of barefoot traffic. Water shoes and sandals can provide added protection in these areas.
- Don’t use the same foot care equipment on your warts that you or anyone else uses on your uninfected skin and nails.

Sometimes, however, warts still manage to creep in. If they do, don’t wait—let us know right away to help you get rid of those things effectively!

Mark Your Calendars

- October 2** National Produce Misting Day – Those things at the supermarket that aren’t arm showers.
- October 4** National Taco Day – But it’s not on a Tuesday...
- October 7** National Child Health Day – See us for any foot and ankle concerns your children may have.
- October 10** National Cake Decorating Day – Make an edible masterpiece!
- October 15** National I Love Lucy Day – The first episode aired today in 1951.
- October 17** National Black Poetry Day – The birthday of the US’s first published black poet, Jupiter Hammon, in 1711.
- October 24** National Bologna Day – The lunch meat; not lies.
- October 27** National Black Cat Day – Cross paths with one.



Is There Merit to a Mental Health Day?

We all have responsibilities, but sometimes things can become overwhelming. The more things build up, the more it weighs on us mentally, emotionally, and even physically or spiritually. Motivation goes out the window. You become easily irritated and burnt out. You might even get sick more often or have aches and pains just from stress.

As these issues grow more prevalent and exposed, the idea of a “mental health day”—taking time off for mental recuperation—has become more of a topic.

It may be easy to consider a mental health day as nothing more than an excuse to spend a day off, but the overall benefits can be much better in the long run for an individual and their productivity. What kind of work are you really putting in if you’re always exhausted, withdrawn, and not taking care of yourself, after all?

Burnout tends to happen in a cycle. We run ahead well, but eventually stuff builds up and we can use a small time to unload. Being aware of how this works for you can be very important and knowing what time of year you may be prone to burnout can help you prevent or at least lessen the problem.

A good “mental health day” should be a 24-hour period of freedom. For some of us, that might mean complete relaxation at home, heading out to nature, or going to the spa. For others, it might mean getting away from the children for a day to run some errands. If it makes you feel grounded and in control, it will help.

If you don’t feel better after taking a day, however, you might have deeper depression at hand. Consult with your primary care physician or a therapist if you continue to feel consistently burnt out.



Mexican Pumpkin Punch

This festive fall punch comes with additional options, including an alcoholic variation.

Ingredients

- 2 cups packed dark brown sugar
- 4 cinnamon sticks
- 1 29-ounce can (or about 3 ½ c.) of pure pumpkin
- 2 limes
- Rum (optional)
- Pineapple chunks and/or pecans (optional)

Preparation

- Add 12 cups water, brown sugar, and cinnamon sticks to a large pot and boil over medium-high heat, stirring until the sugar is dissolved. Stir in the pure pumpkin and return to a simmer.
- Meanwhile, remove the zest from the limes in wide strips with a vegetable peeler. Add to the pot and simmer 15 minutes.
- Let the mixture cool, then refrigerate 2-3 hours. The pumpkin pulp will settle to the bottom.
- Working in batches, ladle the liquid into a fine-mesh strainer set over a pitcher. Discard pumpkin pulp and lime zest. Return the cinnamon sticks to the punch and refrigerate until serving time.
- Pour into ice-filled glasses. Add a splash of rum, pineapple, and/or pecans, if desired.

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Are Flats Where It's at for Footwear?

You are likely aware of the downsides of wearing high heels for long periods of time, whether from one of our previous newsletters, sagely advice from a friend or loved one, or simple life experience.

If heels are bad, though, then does that mean you should go the opposite way? Flatter is better?

Not quite.

While high heels do indeed tend to force pressure toward the front of the foot, leading to pain and potentially making problems like bunions and hammertoes worse, going too flat can lead to problems as well.

If you go for absolutely flat shoes, such as ballet flats and even flip-flops, you are giving your feet almost no arch support whatsoever. You might as well be walking with cardboard tied to your feet.

Without good arch support, you are risking strain-related problems such as plantar fasciitis, a very common cause of heel pain. The way your body tries to compensate for the lack of support can also lead to problems in the knees, hips, or back.

Sneakers and general shoes with arch support are a much better choice, and if you do want to wear heels, keep them 2 inches at the highest and use them sparingly. For more advice on the best types of footwear for your individual lifestyle and needs, don't be afraid to ask us. We're happy to help!

