



December 15th, 2013

Happy Feet; Happier You!

We use them for running, jumping, walking and standing - the health of your feet also impacts your gait, back and leg joints. Your feet are your foundation – and when they aren't happy, you can't be!

Do your feet hurt?

Calluses & corns are thick, hardened skin that develops at pressure points. They can usually be reduced by wearing shoes that fit well and by using special cushions or shoe inserts. You can also help them along by gently rubbing them with a pumice stone after bathing or a foot soak. Be cautious not to be too aggressive. Avoid products that "dissolve" calluses & corns – and, if you have diabetes, talk with a foot care professional.

Finding the right support!

Many people have experimented with "wedge" insoles for their shoes to reduce the discomfort of knee arthritis. It was thought that building up the outer edge of the sole would reduce the pressure on the inner knee, where most arthritis occurs. However, an international study has proven these don't work. What does? Using a cane can help with stability and shoes that have a flat heel and flexible sole have demonstrated improvement.

Finding shoes that fit!

When buying shoes remember: they should not need to be "broken in!" Try shoes on in the afternoon and wear the socks you will wear with them. Make sure there's 1/4 to 1/2 inch beyond the longest toe. The heel should fit snugly without pinching – nor should they pinch across the ball of the foot and toes. The sole should be sturdy and protective with cushioning for comfort. Take them for a test drive – on hard surfaces, not just the carpeted shoe department.

Make sure you choose well-fitted shoes, with sufficient stability, arch support and cushioning. Consider wearing light compression socks – specially designed to help move blood back up the leg and reduce swelling in the feet & ankles. And, a little exercise helps too; try picking up a towel with the toes and doing toe and heel raises for strength and flexibility.

Your pharmacist can help you choose light compression socks or let you know if you need to see your physician for a prescription strength. They can also set you up with special diabetic socks and keep you on your feet!