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## Preventing Running Injuries

Both long-distance runners and casual joggers can improve their performance by keeping their feet in top condition and taking steps to control foot problems common in runners. Runners' feet are the most vulnerable to injury, so it's important to take the proper steps to strengthen and condition them. Here are some common running injuries and how to avoid them.

**Heel Pain:** The most common complaint of foot pain is caused by inflammation of the ligament that holds up the arch, known as plantar fasciitis.

**Treat it By:** Doing stretching exercises, wear sturdier shoes with arch support, ice the foot, take anti-inflammatory medications and if the heel pain persists.

**Achilles Tendon Pain:** Tendonitis can occur in the Achilles tendon or other areas of the foot and ankle and serves as a warning sign of overuse. Overdoing it with training can cause tendonitis, especially in beginners who are doing too much too soon.

**Treat it By:** Resting, ice the foot and take anti-inflammatory medications. If the heel pain persists, make an appointment to see a foot and ankle surgeon. They can help with orthotics or physical therapy.

**Pain in Ball of Foot:** Pain in the area of the foot below the toes is often a neuroma—pinched nerve in between the toes—or inflammation of the joints where the toes meet the foot bones. This can cause pain, numbness and burning in the area.

**Treat it By:** Wear sturdier shoes with arch support or see a foot and ankle surgeon for padding, injections or orthotics to help relieve pain.



**Stress Fractures/Broken Bones:** Being able to walk on the foot doesn't mean it's not broken. Stress fractures can occur in the foot and be slower to show symptoms like swelling or pain.

**Treat it By: RICE** - Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation. If pain and swelling continues after three or four days of RICE, see a foot and ankle surgeon for further evaluation and a proper diagnosis.

**If pain continues, make an appointment with a foot and ankle surgeon to get it properly examined as soon as possible. Visit [FootHealthFacts.org](http://FootHealthFacts.org) to find one in your area.**

## Tackling Big Toe Pain



Your big toe is an important part of the body. It helps to keep our balance, bends with each step we take, gets jammed with any quick stops or twisting motion and is under added stress when wearing heels.

With anything that takes a beating like the big toe, occasional pain is normal and could stem from a busy, activity-filled day, but constant pain could be the sign of an arthritic condition called hallux rigidus. Hallux refers to the big toe and rigidus means the toe is rigid and cannot move. If it's in an earlier stage and movement is only slightly limited it's called hallux limitus, but as the joint stiffens and worsens over time it can make it difficult for you to walk, stand for long periods of time or crouch down.

Hallux rigidus can be hereditary, but often it is caused by repetitive stress from the workplace or some sports. Workers who are required to stoop a lot, golf and tennis players are more prone to developing hallux rigidus. It can also stem from an injury like a severe stubbed toe.

If you experience any big toe pain while standing for long periods, walking, squatting or bending over, it's time to contact a foot and ankle surgeon for an examination. If caught early, it can be improved over time with conservative treatments such as shoe modifications, physical therapy, orthotics, medication or injection therapy. As the condition worsens if conservative treatment methods fail, surgery may be required.

**If you notice toe pain, make an appointment with a foot and ankle surgeon to get it properly examined as soon as possible. Visit [FootHealthFacts.org](http://FootHealthFacts.org) to find one in your area.**

## Watch Out for Old Injuries

After spending the long winter months cooped up inside, the first signs of spring always bring excitement and eagerness to get outside. Before heading out for your favorite sports or hitting the pavement, keep in mind the last few months of increased inactivity may have weakened the muscles, tendons and ligaments of your feet and ankles. Stretch and condition your feet and ankles to work your way up to any outdoor activities to avoid injury. If you've experienced a foot or ankle injury in the past, residual pain and weakness could reappear once you start ramping up your activity.

To avoid reinjuring your foot or ankle, schedule an appointment with a foot and ankle surgeon for an athletic or fitness plan to help you ease into the season. They can examine your foot or ankle for damage caused by improperly healing ligaments, which could lead to pain and swelling. Foot and ankle pain is never normal no matter how light or strenuous the activity. Schedule an appointment with a foot and ankle surgeon to make sure your feet and ankles are ready for spring! **To find one in your area, visit [FootHealthFacts.org](https://www.foothealthfacts.org).**



## Evaluate Your Feet with the Foot Push-Up Test



Spring is a great time to check your feet to make sure they're in the best shape for warmer weather—especially your arches. A great way to see how your arches are performing is by taking a foot push-up test.

1. Stand barefoot facing your kitchen counter.
2. Place your palms on the countertop with slight pressure.
3. Standing with your back straight, lift one foot off the floor.
4. Slowly lift the heel of the opposite foot, placing all your weight onto the ball of your foot.
5. Slowly lower your heel back to the floor.
6. Do 10 of these foot push-ups.

**Repeat these steps with the other foot. What did you notice?**

If you had problems doing just one push-up and can't rise up on the ball of your foot without putting a lot of pressure on your hands, leaning

over the counter or experiencing pain, your arch may have a problem. The arch tendons can stretch or rupture leading to the arch to collapse. Make an appointment with a foot and ankle surgeon for a proper evaluation.

If you can easily rise onto the ball of your foot, but had a hard time performing 10 reps, you may have arch fatigue. Exercises to strengthen and stretch the leg muscles can help the problem. You can even do foot push-up regularly to help strengthen the muscles.

If it was easy to rise onto the ball of your foot, but experienced arch pain during the exercise, your arch may be overworked and inflamed.

**Make an appointment with a foot and ankle surgeon to help you manage the problem treat it properly. To find one in your area, visit [FootHealthFacts.org](https://www.foothealthfacts.org).**

