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Tell Injuries to Take a Hike this Fall

As summer winds down and the air turns crisp, many outdoor enthusiasts prepare to welcome fall from the hiking trail. Hiking's a great form of exercise and the perfect way to experience the shift in seasons while watching the leaves change color. However, a successful hike takes more preparation than one might think. Before hitting the trail, hikers should be mindful of the strain this outdoor activity can put on their feet and ankles.

Here are some tips to ensure your fall hikes aren't cut short by heel pain, ankle sprains or Achilles tendon injuries.

Proper Footwear

Wear shoes with good support. Tennis shoes aren't the best for hiking and lack the support needed for hiking on uneven, steep or slippery terrain. Hiking boots should be well-insulated and moisture proof with a stiff sole for maximum support.

Take It Easy

As with most physical activities, it's better to start small and work your way up as you get comfortable and more confident. Physical conditioning is important to avoiding injuries. Strengthening, stretching and balancing exercises will help immensely when it comes to more challenging terrain. Do as much as your body can handle, and ease into a hiking routine before tackling long, strenuous trails.



Body Talk

Listen to your body and take a break if something starts hurting. Hiking in pain will only increase the risk of a serious injury. If you experience foot or ankle pain while hiking and it doesn't get better with rest, schedule an appointment with a foot and ankle surgeon as soon as possible. Ankle and Achilles tendon injuries need to be evaluated and treated as early as possible. If left untreated, these injuries could ruin your hiking plans for a long time.

If you suffer an injury out on the trails this fall, remember the RICE method – rest, ice, compression, elevation and seek care from a foot and ankle surgeon as soon as possible. To find a foot and ankle surgeon in your area, visit FootHealthFacts.org and search for one in the Find an ACFAS Physician tool.

Combating Diabetes is a Family Affair

National Diabetes Month this November serves as an excellent reminder that diabetes is a "family disease" and all family members should take active roles to help their loved ones with diabetes stay healthy.

Here are some ways the whole family can participate in healthy choices and actions:

- **Plan meals carefully.** Everyone can benefit from healthful-eating guidelines that your diabetic family member needs to follow.
- **Make fitness a part of your day.** Taking a walk together is a great way to help the entire family stay in shape, and to help your diabetic family member
- **Feet can get cold on chilly autumn nights,** so anyone with diabetes should wear socks to bed if their feet are chilly. They should NEVER use a heating pad or hot water bottle.
- **Help your family member check his or her feet.** It's not always easy to look at the bottoms of someone's feet, but it's very important. Regular foot-checking can help you catch cuts, blisters, scratches, redness or swelling right at the start, before they become a big problem. So, inspect feet daily, and call our office at the first sign of trouble.

Regular visits to a foot and ankle surgeon to check for issues associated with diabetes are important. And as always, if your loved one experiences problems



with their feet, make an appointment with a foot and ankle surgeon for an exam.

To find a foot and ankle surgeon near you, visit FootHealthFacts.org and search using the Find an ACFAS Physician search tool.

Make Heading Back to School Painless for Feet



After enjoying freedom all summer, heading back to school can be a hard transition. While this change in routine can be especially tough for kids, it shouldn't be tough on their feet. Most kids and teens spend the majority of their summer vacation in flip-flops, but when it's time to head back to school these casual sandals can lead to aches, pains and increase the risk of injury.

Kids have a growth plate in their heels that continues to grow into their mid-teenage years. While flip-flops offer casual comfort, they don't cushion the heel, which makes repetitive stress from walking particularly harmful, causing inflammation to the bone growth area, pain and tenderness.

If your child is complaining of foot pain, schedule an appointment with our office. This type of pain can usually be eliminated with simple methods including stretching, ice massage, anti-inflammatory medications or shoe inserts.

Common problems from flip-flops:

- Heel and Arch Pain
- Painful Pinched Nerves
- Broken or Sprained Toes
- Plantar Warts
- Callus Build-up on the Heels and Toes
- Inflammation of the Achilles Tendon
- Sprained Ankles
- Cuts and Scrapes
- Athlete's Foot

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Painful Big Toe? Relief is in Sight

Many people give little thought to their big toes, while others are plagued by a painful condition that limits or eventually totally restricts movement of that all-important toe. Once the big toe starts to hurt, it's obvious just how much we use it to get around, bend over or even stand.

Pain in the big toe can be caused from a common degenerative disorder known as hallux limitus in its earlier stages and hallux rigidus later on. It can turn everyday motions such as walking, stooping and climbing stairs into a struggle. The good news is that proper treatment can bring tremendous relief.

How do you know if you have hallux limitus? First, it starts out as a painful big toe joint that has stiffness and usually a little loss of motion. As the disorder progresses, arthritis sets in and continually worsens. Bone spurs (overgrowths) can develop, and the toe increasingly loses its range of motion. At the end stage (hallux rigidus), all motion is lost, and the toe is rigid. When it gets to that point, walking is severely impaired, and pain may be present even at rest. Shoes can be difficult to wear due to bone spurs, and how you walk or gait changes that were made to compensate for the painful toe can lead to other problems such as pain in other areas.

Treatment Options: Conservative treatment options include wearing custom-made insoles (orthotics) to correct the structural foot abnormalities that are causing the problem, changing footwear, taking oral anti-inflammatory medications, receiving cortisone injections and attending physical therapy.

Surgery is the next step if none of these options relieve the pain. No matter



which method we prescribe, the end result is typically the same: a big toe that feels remarkably better.

Early diagnosis and treatment can help alleviate the symptoms of hallux limitus through conservative treatment options.

To find a foot and ankle surgeon near you to help with a painful big toe, visit FootHealthFacts.org and use the Find an ACFAS Physician tool to search for a surgeon near you.

