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## Make the Switch from Sandals to Shoes Safely



As you transition from summer sandals and bare feet to shoes and socks for the fall, keep in mind that this change can cause foot problems. Contact your foot and ankle surgeon if you experience any of the following issues after you switch to fall shoes.

### Ingrown Toenails

Wearing enclosed or improperly sized shoes can lead to ingrown toenails. Trim your toenails straight across and wear shoes that are not tight in the toe box.

### Irritated Bunions, Bone Spurs & Hammertoes

Constant rubbing on your feet from shoes can irritate any existing hammertoes, bunions or bone spurs. Wear socks and properly fitting shoes and consider having your shoe stretched in the areas of irritation to provide some relief.

### Neuroma Flare-Ups

Tight-fitting, enclosed shoes can trigger neuromas, or nerve pain. Make sure your shoes provide enough room in the toe area so your toes are not squeezed or irritated.

### Toenail Fungus

Fungus thrives in dark, moist and warm environments, such as your shoes. To prevent fungal growth, disinfect your shoes and wear different pairs to allow them to air out. Also remove any leftover summer nail polish from your toes. Nail polish seals the nail and traps moisture, which can create a breeding ground for fungus.

## Regular Foot Exams Help Keep Diabetic Feet Healthy

If you have diabetes, make time to schedule regular foot exams with your foot and ankle surgeon to help keep your feet healthy. Diabetic feet are vulnerable to ulcerations and other serious foot conditions, such as Charcot foot, caused by poor circulation in the lower limbs and reduced nerve sensation. If left untreated, these conditions can lead to infection, deformity or foot amputation.

During your foot exam, your foot and ankle surgeon will assess your feet for nerve sensation, skin irregularities (corns, calluses, punctures and redness), swelling, drainage and any unnatural pressure points prone to ulceration. If the surgeon finds any pre-ulcerative conditions, he or she will begin prompt

treatment to prevent any wounds from occurring.

### In between exams, be sure to:

- inspect your feet daily for cuts, blisters, redness, swelling or nail problems;
- gently cleanse your feet each day with soap and lukewarm water;
- regularly moisturize your feet to avoid itching or cracking.

If your foot changes shape or if you notice any increased warmth, redness, pain, blisters or bleeding, stay off your foot and make an appointment with your foot and ankle surgeon as soon as possible to be evaluated. Walking on an injured foot or delaying treatment may lead to serious consequences.

**Caring for your diabetic feet is essential to healthy living. Make routine foot care appointments with your foot and ankle surgeon to help ward off ulcerations and more serious issues.**



# Wear the Right Shoe to Avoid Achilles Tendon Injuries

Do your athletic shoes bend in the middle? If so, they can put pressure on your heel and achilles tendon and cause injury, especially when playing any sport that requires running or jumping.

The Achilles tendon is the largest tendon in the body and connects the calf muscle to the heel bone. When the middle of the sole in an athletic shoe collapses, pressure is transferred from the midfoot area to the heel, which can stretch the Achilles tendon excessively. This can lead to inflammation, also known as Achilles tendonitis.

Warning signs of Achilles tendonitis include pain and swelling in the tendon area following exercise. The leg may also feel stiff or tired. Rest, ice and anti-inflammatory drugs, such as ibuprofen, can relieve Achilles tendonitis, but if symptoms persist, schedule an appointment with your foot and ankle surgeon so he or she can determine the extent of the problem

and the potential risk for a ruptured or torn tendon. A torn or ruptured Achilles tendon requires surgery, and recovery is often slow and involves extensive rehabilitation.

## To avoid Achilles tendon injuries:

- replace your shoes every 400 miles;
- always stretch and walk before beginning any strenuous exercise;
- increase the difficulty of any new exercise programs gradually to allow your calf muscles to adjust and become more flexible.

*Don't forget, your foot and ankle surgeon is always here to help you select the proper shoe for your favorite athletic activity.*



# Protect Your Feet & Ankles During Fall Yardwork

As you rake leaves this fall and prepare your yard for the winter ahead, follow these tips to help keep your feet and ankles safe from injury:

## ► Wear the right shoes.

No matter how mild the weather may be, don't wear sandals. Wear sturdy leather shoes with support to protect your feet from sharp objects, including the blades from power equipment.

## ► Keep children away from leaf blowers, power lawnmowers and chainsaws.

These should not be left out where kids are playing or where other inexperienced users have access.

## ► Don't work on wet surfaces.

You could slip and injure your foot or ankle when carrying heavy loads across wet grass or leaves.

## ► Warm up and stretch before starting yardwork.

Yardwork can be just as strenuous as a workout at the gym. Warm up and perform stretching exercises prior to any tasks to avoid stressing the muscles and tendons in your feet, ankles and calves.



*If you experience a foot or ankle injury while tending to your lawn this fall, seek emergency care if necessary and then follow up with a foot and ankle surgeon in your area. Need one? Visit [FootHealthFacts.org](http://FootHealthFacts.org) to find one close to your home.*

