

## Tips for Reducing Swelling in Your Feet and Ankles

A long day on the job, side effects from medicines, or even expecting a new addition to the family can all be reasons why your feet and ankles look almost unrecognizable to you at the end of the day.

When our feet or ankles swell, they are collecting and retaining fluid. This fluid comes from our smallest blood vessels, often as a result of excess pressure on them.

While swelling can be the sign of a significant problem that needs more advanced treatment, many times symptoms can be helped or relieved by making a few changes. Consider these tips for reducing swelling:

- **Move more.** If you spend much of your day standing or sitting, moving your legs and increasing circulation can help reduce swelling. Swimming is an excellent option, as it places no weight on the feet.
- **Use compression socks.** Compression socks are a good investment for almost anyone but are especially helpful for those with edema. Choose your socks wisely, however, as having them too tight can be harmful. Start with the lowest pressure you can find or consult us for advice.
- **Drink more water.** More? But isn't this about not retaining fluid? Yes, and making sure you have an adequate water intake helps reduce retention. There is no need to go overboard, though. Don't drink more than you're comfortable with or feel you need.

If you are living with diabetes, have had swelling for a long time no matter what you've done, or see wounds or blisters on your feet, let us know right away. You likely need additional treatment, and the sooner, the better!



### About the Doctor

Matt Wettstein, DPM

Advanced Foot and Ankle is led by Dr. Matt Wettstein. Originally from Logan, UT, Dr. Wettstein completed his undergraduate studies at Utah State University before attending Des Moines University in the College of Podiatric Medicine and Surgery. After graduating with top honors, he then completed his residency in Salt Lake City, UT. Dr. Wettstein is married and has four, wonderful, children.

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# Keeping Corns and Calluses at Bay

Do you have some friction in your life? Just about everyone does, metaphorically; but there's physical friction if your feet have corns or calluses!

The bump of a corn or the unsightly patch of a callus is your skin's method of protecting itself against some form of pressure or aggravation against it. They serve a bit like natural shields, but this shield can still be painful if it's being aggravated, too.

Although they're natural, having corns or calluses is not ideal. It's a sign that something is rubbing up or pressuring your foot that shouldn't be. By addressing the cause of that friction, you will address the corns and calluses themselves.

If you have had calluses or corns for some time, it is well worth bringing them to our attention. If you have just noticed yours, there are a few easy steps you can take to try and remedy the situation.

- **Change your footwear.** Shoes that are too tight or ill-fitting can cause plenty of friction. And if you are not wearing socks with your shoes, you need that added layer of protection!
- **Get some extra protective help.** Coverings such as felt pads and toe separators can help reduce contact and allow a corn or callus better opportunity to heal.
- **Use a pumice stone (carefully!).** Removing layers of thickened skin with a pumice stone can help reduce friction against a corn or callus and help it heal faster. This must be performed carefully, however, to prevent damage. Ask us how if you are not sure!

There may be other factors that have an influence, including abnormal foot shapes and toe deformities. We are more than happy to help you if these are the case.

## Have a Strange Sensation in the Ball of Your Foot?

Does it feel like you're always stepping on a little stone that's lodged in the front of your shoe, just beneath the toes, but nothing's there? Is it sometimes accompanied by a burning, tingling or numbness around the toes and the ball of your foot?

What you *might* be experiencing is a neuroma. What's that?

A neuroma is a thickening of the tissue surrounding one or more of your nerves. This type of growth is benign, but it can compress and irritate the nerves it surrounds. This leads to strange, painful, and annoying sensations.

What can cause a neuroma to form? Basically, any sort of consistent pressure or irritation to the area could do it. This might involve wearing shoes that are too cramped toward the front of the foot (high heels tend to be a number one suspect), engaging in extended running or other sports with high foot impact can also cause problems if the feet aren't provided enough time for rest and recovery.

It might also be possible that the cause is more natural in nature; that you have a foot shape that makes the development of a neuroma more likely.

Whatever the potential cause, your best course of action is to seek proper diagnosis and treatment for the condition. Don't let that phantom pebble drive you up the wall; get the help you need today!



# Signs That Exercise Might Be Hurting You

Exercise, at a fundamental level, is a good thing. By keeping our bodies active and reasonably pushing our limits, we grow stronger and more enduring.

However, there is such a thing as challenging our bodies too much. If we're working through pain or setting expectations way too high, it can result in more harm to us than good. You don't have to be a pro athlete to do this, either. It's pushing your limits beyond whatever your body is currently in shape to do.

Here are some signs that the intensity or technique of your workouts may be causing harm:

- Feeling extremely fatigued
- Suffering from chronic colds and infections
- Trouble sleeping
- A decline in stamina and energy
- Weight gain (as your body tries to conserve energy)
- For women, a halt to their period

If your muscles are feeling sore from overuse, it can usually require only a couple days of rest to recover. That's relatively normal.

If you are seriously overtraining, however, and have some of the symptoms mentioned above, you should consult with your primary care physician or an expert in sports medicine. Odds are that a longer recovery time may be needed, but it is something that is in your best interest to perform wisely.

And, if you have pain in your feet or ankles that you feel may be workout related, please see us about it. We can help you change up your plans to heal properly and help ensure such setbacks don't happen again.



## Hot Mulled Cider

As the temperature starts to decline and apple season starts to gain in many areas, a comforting apple drink may just hit the spot some nights!

### Ingredients

- 16 cups of apple juice (pure, not from concentrate) or fresh apple cider
- Four 2-inch cinnamon sticks
- Peels and juice of 2 oranges
- 8 whole cloves
- 6 star anise

### Preparation

- Combine all ingredients in a saucepan and simmer over low heat for 5-10 minutes.
- Alternatively, you could combine all ingredients in a slow cooker and keep warm on low heat.

# ADVANCED FOOT & ANKLE

176 Falls Ave, Ste 200, Twin Falls, ID 83301  
208-731-6321

1263 Bennett Ave, Burley, ID 83318  
208-312-4646

www.idahofoot.com



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# What to Look for in Good Slippers

Slippers don't tend to get a lot of attention. Sometimes we just want something to put on after a long day at work or for a cold night, and are happy shoving our feet into just about anything.

However, some considerations for comfort and safety can go a long way toward a much more relaxing experience—and that's what we're looking for with slippers, right?

Here are a few items to keep in mind:

- **Do you want open-back or closed-back?** A closed back, in general, will be a good way to go. This provides more support to the foot and keeps your toes from involuntarily gripping against the slipper to hold on. However, if you have heel pain caused by pressure against the back of the heel, an open-back design may be preferable for you.
- **Do you need room for a custom orthotic?** If you wear an insert in your shoes, you should have it in your slippers as well. Make sure there is enough room, or that the slipper has a removable insole.
- **Is there enough arch support?** Whether you have orthotics or not, your slipper should provide good, comfortable support to the arch. "Flip-flop" style slippers are usually not going to provide this as well as other options.

The best way to determine whether a slipper works for you is to, of course, try it on. Walk around in them a bit before buying to help identify any potential problems there may be. And if you have any questions about what kinds of slippers might be best for your feet, all you have to do is give us a call.