

Flip-Flops Are for Politics, Not Your Feet

The arrival of summer weather is accompanied by the emergence of flip-flops. Flip-flops may be convenient, freeing, and sometimes even stylish-looking, but with extended use are harmful to feet and ankles. Especially bad, but commonly worn, are flip-flops sporting thin, totally flat, rubber soles; flimsy straps; and cheap plastic toe posts.

Flip-flops offer minimal support for arches, which can lead to arch discomfort and plantar fasciitis, painful inflammation of the thick band of tissue that extends from the heel to the ball of the foot.

The absence of shock absorption and heel cushioning means feet are under constant duress. The lack of stability makes ankles more prone to sprains.

Feet are also susceptible to cuts and scrapes, stubbed toes, broken toes, torn nail beds, and blisters. Puncture wounds are an enhanced threat and can be deceptive. Damage sometimes appears minimal, but wounds can run deep and trigger infection without proper treatment.

Toes have to continually grip the flip-flops to keep them on one's feet, which can result in tendonitis. A person's walking pattern typically changes, too, which can potentially send a ripple effect of discomfort to the ankles, knees, hips, and back. In addition, bunions can be aggravated, and conditions may be ripened for hammertoes.

Wearing flip-flops for short stretches, such as crossing hot surfaces or walking poolside or through a locker room to minimize contact with fungi (e.g., athlete's foot), can be beneficial, but never wear them for extended periods of time.

If you experience lingering foot or ankle pain, contact our office. If you insist on wearing flip-flops, we can offer suggestions. Some flip-flops are less harmful than others.



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.

Get Social w/Us





'Riding the Rail' and 'Catching Air'

Skateboarding is a thrill for many kids and some adults as well. It's an excellent overall workout, a great social activity, and an outdoor, fresh-air adventure.

But skateboarding can be tough on feet and ankles. There are a lot of repetitive, forceful motions that can lead to painful foot and heel conditions. For instance, the intense, repetitive gripping motion of the toes while skateboarding stresses the plantar fascia, which can result in heel and arch pain.

The constant pressure exerted on feet can instigate Achilles tendonitis over time or lead to stress fractures. Tricks and jumps can be jarring for feet and ankles, too, and if a person doesn't stick the landing, an ankle sprain or fracture is sometimes in their immediate future.

Neuromas are also a common plight among skateboarders. A pinched nerve in the foot becomes inflamed, and pain, tingling, or numbness manifests between the second and fourth toes. Overuse, overpronation, and poor skateboarding technique may be to blame.

Skateboarders are rightly cautioned to wear proper protective gear, such as a helmet, knee pads, and elbow pads. Proper footwear should also be part of the protective package.

Skate-shoe factory inserts often lack proper arch support and shock absorption — both critical to healthy feet and ankles. Swap out the factory inserts with custom insoles that offer firm arch support, are made of durable material, will not collapse under pressure, and cup the heel (to prevent slippage during maneuvers).

If a skateboarder in your family suffers a foot or ankle injury, address it immediately by scheduling an appointment with our office. We will diagnose and treat the condition, and can offer guidance on proper skateboarding footwear and insoles.

Healthy Feet and Ankles Should Be Par for the Course



Despite the frustrations inherent in golf, many diehards hit the courses each day. One beautiful shot for every nine errant ones is quite addictive. Fresh air, exercise, and socialization don't hurt either.

If you want to improve your golf game, healthy feet and ankles are a must. Weight transfers and follow-throughs on your swing place a lot of stress on the big toe, the heel, and the ball of the foot.

Swing follow-throughs can overextend the big-toe joint on the back foot. Avid golfers may eventually wear out the cartilage or jam the joint. If left untreated, arthritis can set in, jeopardizing your enjoyment of the sport or rendering you unable to continue playing.

The plantar fascia may become inflamed with the repetitive forces it encounters. Jabbing, knife-like heel pain makes it difficult to maintain a solid stance at key points in a golf swing.

Weight transfers to the front foot on a swing may cause a neuroma, or "pinched nerve." Repeated compressions create a benign growth of nerve tissue on the ball of the foot that becomes thickened, enlarged, irritated, and painful — frequently between the third and fourth toes.

Chronic ankle instability due to untreated past ankle sprains and Achilles tendonitis are conditions that affect balance and will hamper your game.

Golf shoes that don't fit well may result in corns and calluses. Simply standing and walking may be uncomfortable; feet will lack proper support.

If your feet or ankles are hurting, your golf game will suffer, too. Contact our office for a thorough evaluation. With proper treatment, playing far into the future can be a "fore"gone conclusion.

Don't Allow Rip Currents to Become R.I.P. Currents

Vacationers flock to beaches every summer to frolic in the sand and surf — but don't allow deadly rip currents to ruin the fun.

Rip currents are powerful, narrow channels of fast-moving water flowing away from shore. Swimmers caught in one are swept out to deeper waters, sometimes out of their element ... often without even realizing it.

The United States Lifesaving Association states that over 100 deaths each year can be attributed to rip currents. Rip currents also account for 80 percent of lifeguard beach rescues.

Rip currents are present on all surf beaches in the United States, including the Great Lakes. Their average speed can range up to eight feet per second, enough to overwhelm an Olympic swimmer. Rip currents don't pull people under the water; they pull people farther from the shore. Rip currents also commonly form at jetties and piers.

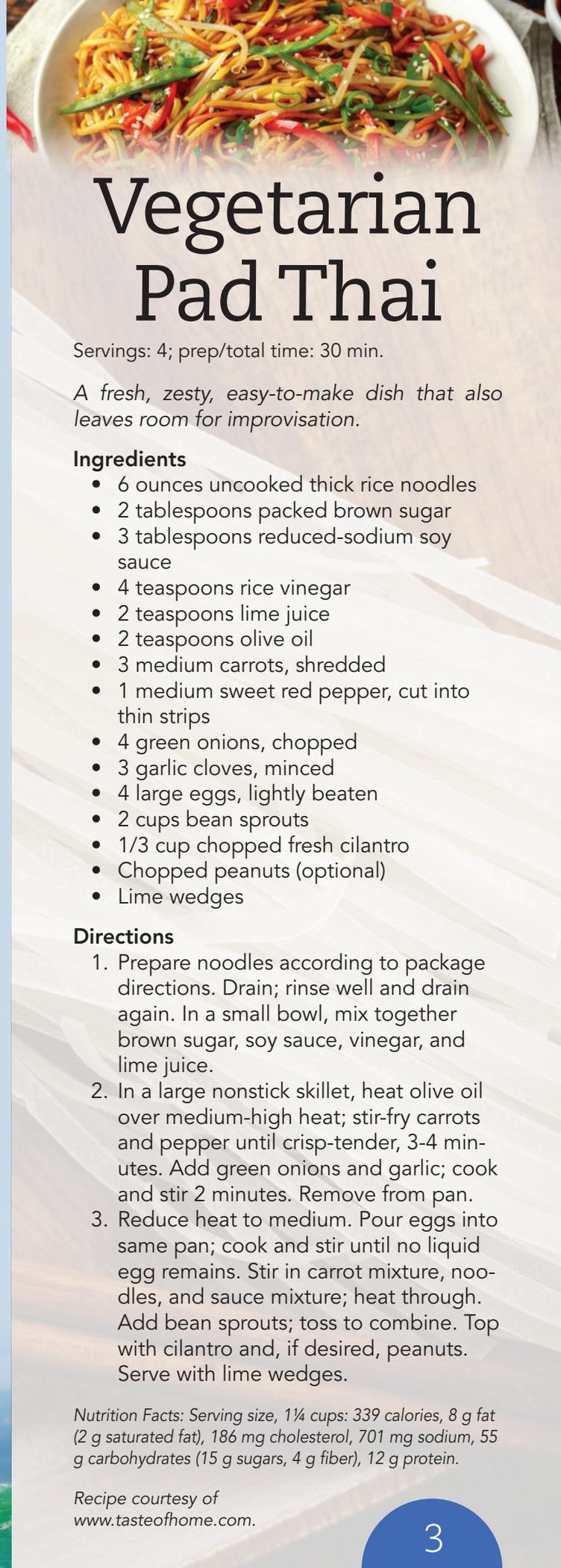
However, rip currents leave clues as to their location:

- A gap of darker, seemingly calm water (ironically) between areas of breaking waves and whitewater.
- Or, conversely, a channel of water that is choppy and churning more than neighboring waters.
- A line of debris, foam, and seaweed moving seaward.

If in the clutches of a rip current, don't panic; it won't pull you under. Never try to swim against it; it will just fatigue you. Instead, swim parallel to the shoreline to escape its grasp, then come to shore. (This assumes you know how to swim!) Rip currents frequently do not exceed 20 yards in width — safety is much closer than you think.

The following will help, too:

- Learn how to swim!
- Always swim in an area protected by lifeguards.
- Never swim alone.
- Learn to identify rip currents.



Vegetarian Pad Thai

Servings: 4; prep/total time: 30 min.

A fresh, zesty, easy-to-make dish that also leaves room for improvisation.

Ingredients

- 6 ounces uncooked thick rice noodles
- 2 tablespoons packed brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 4 teaspoons rice vinegar
- 2 teaspoons lime juice
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 3 medium carrots, shredded
- 1 medium sweet red pepper, cut into thin strips
- 4 green onions, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 4 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 cups bean sprouts
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- Chopped peanuts (optional)
- Lime wedges

Directions

1. Prepare noodles according to package directions. Drain; rinse well and drain again. In a small bowl, mix together brown sugar, soy sauce, vinegar, and lime juice.
2. In a large nonstick skillet, heat olive oil over medium-high heat; stir-fry carrots and pepper until crisp-tender, 3-4 minutes. Add green onions and garlic; cook and stir 2 minutes. Remove from pan.
3. Reduce heat to medium. Pour eggs into same pan; cook and stir until no liquid egg remains. Stir in carrot mixture, noodles, and sauce mixture; heat through. Add bean sprouts; toss to combine. Top with cilantro and, if desired, peanuts. Serve with lime wedges.

Nutrition Facts: Serving size, 1 1/4 cups: 339 calories, 8 g fat (2 g saturated fat), 186 mg cholesterol, 701 mg sodium, 55 g carbohydrates (15 g sugars, 4 g fiber), 12 g protein.

*Recipe courtesy of
www.tasteofhome.com.*

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Don't Give Hammertoes a Foothold

Each of our eight smaller toes has three bones (phalanges) and two joints (interphalangeal) — our big toes have one fewer of each.

A hammertoe is a deformity of one or both of the joints of a smaller toe that most commonly results from a muscle/tendon/ligament imbalance. The phalanges should be aligned in fairly straight fashion. With a hammertoe, one of the joints bends (usually the second one from the tip of the toe) and becomes prominent.

A direct injury can predispose someone to a hammertoe. Same thing with overuse (e.g., playing certain sports). Underlying conditions such as diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, and neuromuscular disorders make it more likely, too. Some inherited foot structures also encourage hammertoe formation more than others.

Shoes that fit poorly are major contributors to hammertoe development as well. A shoe size or toe box that is too small places excessive stress on toes. High heels are infamous for cramping toes, which helps explain why women have more issues with hammertoes than men.

A hammertoe can be painful when wearing shoes, as the misaligned toe's level of friction with the shoe is increased. Other friction byproducts include corns and/or calluses on the toes, between the toes, and on the ball of the foot. Inflammation, redness, and swelling may also enter the picture.

A hammertoe will progressively worsen without treatment. Conservative treatment is highly effective in straightening a hammertoe ... if the hammertoe is dealt with in an early stage of development while it's still flexible. A rigid hammertoe may require surgery to relieve pain and improve quality of life.

Don't let a hammertoe gain momentum. Instead, contact our office to schedule a thorough examination.