

On The Run... For Fun and Fitness

Many people find that running benefits both mind and body, thereby improving the quality of life. It's a form of exercise that strengthens heart and lungs, improves endurance, reduces the risk of heart attack, strengthens muscles and bones, and helps you lose fat and control medical problems like high blood pressure and diabetes. As fringe benefits, it can build confidence and reduce stress.

However, it's important to be aware that when you run, your body weight is multiplied two or three times depending on your speed, and your feet bear the burden. Most sports injuries can be prevented by wearing good shoes designed especially for your sport and doing appropriate stretching exercises before you set out.

Before running try these...

The calf and achilles stretch prepares the "push off" muscles and tendons. Standing with the back of the heel on the ground and foot pointed forward, lean towards a wall with the back of the knee straight, then bend. Hold, then switch legs.

The hamstring stretch works the large

muscles in the back of the thigh. Put one foot up on a low wall or other support.

Keeping legs and back straight, bend forward gently and hold. Switch legs.

Walking Briskly: A Fine Alternative

If running isn't for you, try walking! Most of the same mental and physical benefits of running are derived from a brisk daily walk. Done properly, it's a good aerobic workout and the impact on your feet is about half that of running.

Remember...

Your running or walking shoes are your insurance against injury. They protect your feet, legs and back from impact so it's well worth the investment in a quality brand. If running or walking causes you pain, you may have a minor foot deformity. Ask your podiatrist about orthotics to help solve the problem.



Surgical Treatment

Sometimes foot surgery is the only means by which damage can be repaired, function can be restored, appearance can be improved, or pain can be eliminated. Many types of foot surgery can be done on an out-patient basis or in your podiatrist's office. New methods such as laser surgery have made the procedures easier and the recuperation shorter than ever before.

What types of foot problems can be helped surgically?

Hard and soft corns, hammertoes, bunions, bone spurs, plantar warts, cysts and ingrown toenails are just some foot ailments that can be corrected with surgery.

The first step in making a determination about surgery is an accurate diagnosis. Your podiatrist will evaluate your individual problem with great care. This will require a history to learn more about when and why your problems started, a physical exam to see if other areas of your feet and legs are involved, and sometimes X-rays and laboratory tests.

Your podiatrist will then determine the setting for the surgery and what type of anesthesia would be best for you. Most surgeries can be done in the office or in a same day surgery facility. Overnight hospitalization is usually not necessary.

If your podiatrist recommends surgery, it's because after evaluating your problem thoroughly, he or she has determined that there is no other satisfactory solution. Feel free to ask as many questions as you need in order to be comfortable and fully knowledgeable about what will take place from beginning to end.

Foot Care For All Ages



Aging Feet Need Special Care

Changes in your feet are the result of the normal aging process. Your toenails may grow thicker, the skin on your feet may become drier, or you may develop corns, calluses or bunions. Sometimes the changes in your feet may actually be the early sign of more serious problems like diabetes, vascular disease, or arthritis. So as you grow older, you'll want to be watchful for any developing problems and seek your podiatrist's professional advice just as soon as you detect a change.

❑ Thicker nails are harder to take care of. Many older people are unable to see their feet clearly and sometimes they have difficulty reaching them because of arthritis or dizzy spells. If you are unable to treat your feet properly, your podiatrist can give them regular care.

❑ Sometimes the aging process eliminates the pad of fat that cushions your feet, causing pain in the balls of your feet. A soft orthotic may be "just what the doctor ordered."

❑ Arthritis, of just plain wear and tear on your feet over the years may cause degeneration of the joints. Molded shoes can help, but sometimes surgery is appropriate. If you have good circulation and are in good health, you'll be a fine candidate for corrective surgery.

❑ Older feet are more susceptible to infection, cramps, numbness and varicose veins. Support hosiery helps circulation and may therefore prevent these problems from developing or becoming worse.

