

THE LOCKDOWN SESSIONS

#StayHome #BeActive #StaySafe



Looking after your feet

Foot health is usually taken for granted and isn't taken seriously until a problem occurs.

Common foot conditions include blistering, verruca's, athletes' foot, corns/calluses and nail problems. Outlined below is some useful information from our partners at [ACE Feet in Motion](#) on maintaining good foot health.



Runners Nails

Repetitive impact or trauma to your toes when training can cause several problems to the nail bed itself. This can result in pain, reduced activity/training or embarrassment.

These common nail problems include:

- Black thickened nail (subungual haematoma) – this is a bleed under the nail bed caused by trauma from activities like running. This can become more painful if fluid builds up under the nail causing it to become lifted.
- Ingrown toenails- caused by excess pressure on the sides of the nail which can lead to the nail piercing the sides of the nail bed. This can be extremely painful and can cause infection if not cut back appropriately by a podiatrist.
- Fungal nail – many sports people suffer with fungal nail due to excess sweating inside the shoe and the environments they train in. Repetitive trauma to the nail bed also makes it easier for the fungus to penetrate the nail.

Prevention and management of these problems is vital in enabling the continuation of training. Here are a few tips to manage and treat these common nail conditions.

- Make sure your sports shoes fit correctly (we advise about half a thumbnail from longest toe to end of shoe) with a wide enough toe box to prevent trauma.
- File your nails to prevent any nail spikes from piercing the skin or catching the top of the trainer when exercising.
- Alternate between shoes and wear clean socks to prevent any fungus growing. If you have athlete's foot, make sure to treat it with creams containing Lamisil to prevent it from spreading to your nails.
- For fungal affected nails, we recommend you file them regularly, and use a topical treatment called Curanail (available at your local pharmacy).

Corns and Callus

Quite simply hard skin and corns will occur when there is an area of high pressure on the foot. This can sometimes become painful, but easily preventable with the right care. Some people describe corns as having a small stone or pebble stuck to the bottom of their foot. If not treated, corns can grow deeper into the skin, making them very painful.

High impact activities will put even more strain on the feet than usual and often results in a build up of callus or corns.

What causes corns?

There are a few different types of corns that appear in different forms on the feet. These include:

- Hard Corns – These are the most common and usually found around areas with a bony prominence. This will appear as a small patch of thickened skin with a darker centre.
- Soft Corns – These are usually found in between your toes where your skin is soft.
- Seed Corns – These can be seen across the bottom of your foot. They usually occur due to sheering forces in a shoe. This can be because a shoe is too loose and doesn't provide much stability.

How to treat corns?

- We advise NOT to buy corn plasters from shops that contain salicylic acid as it can cause damage to healthy skin tissue.
- Soft corns can be treated by reducing the skin build up between the toes and using silicone toe covers or wedges to reduce the pressure to that area.
- Hard corns can be taken down at our clinic with specialist equipment and offloaded using different padding materials, insoles may also help with severe corns to offload the area.
- Make sure to moisturise your feet 1-2 x daily to help your feet retain moisture and prevent the build-up of hard skin. These include, Flexitol 10 or 15%, CCS cream or E45.

Athletes foot

Athletes foot is a fungal skin infection. It often affects the soles of your feet and in between your toes and it can become, red, flaky, itchy and sometimes cause blistering. Athletes foot could also cause infection if it is left untreated.

What causes Athletes foot?

Trichophyton is a fungus that is commonly found on human skin. However, changes in environments can cause the fungus to multiply at a rapid rate. Trichophyton thrives in moist, warm environments such as swimming pools, changing rooms, gyms and the inside of a shoe, hence the name athlete's foot.

How can I prevent Athletes foot:

- Dry feet thoroughly after washing, especially between toes
- Change socks regularly
- Don't put wet shoes on (alternate between a couple pairs)
- Wear breathable socks
- Wash feet daily
- Wear flip flops/shoes in changing rooms
- Don't share towels
- Refrain from scratching the area as it can cause the infection to spread

If you suspect you have athlete's foot, it can be easily treated. Most people who develop athletes foot have mild symptoms and won't need to see a doctor. Topical antifungal creams, sprays and powders are highly effective and can be bought in your local pharmacies. Antifungals containing terbinafine are the most effective at inhibiting the growth of fungus (Lamisil). Creams should not be applied in between toes as this is already a moist environment and this could make the skin softer and risk breaking the skin (sprays and powders better suited).

Blisters

Blisters are one of the most common sport related injuries that occur due to high areas of pressure on the foot. This high pressure causes your skin cells to produce a fluid filled sac in an attempt to protect the area. Blisters can inhibit your performance if left untreated or even prevent you from being able to train.

Blisters are caused by a friction force that breaks down the skin and eventually causes a wound. They are usually harmless, however frequent training in the same shoes can aggravate the blistered skin and cause infection to the area. The fluid in the blister should be clear, however if it turns to a yellow/green colour, it may mean that it's infected. It would be important to clean the area with an antiseptic or bathing it in saltwater for 5 minutes or getting antibiotics from your GP.

Prevention:

- Wear double layered socks
- Wear new shoes in gradually, until they adjust to your feet.
- If you wear insoles in you trainers, make sure they fit correctly.
- Make sure the inner lining of your shoe is intact or buy seamless shoes.
- Keep your feet dry
- Cover up any spots of high pressure, with tape or plasters

Treatment:

- Cover the area with non-adhesive padding or plasters to protect the area.
 - Try to avoid popping the blister yourself as it could lead to infection
 - If the blister is painful to walk on seek advise from your physiotherapist or podiatrist so that the fluid can be drained using sterile equipment.
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Verruca/Plantar Wart

A verruca is caused by the human papilloma virus (HPV). It spreads when your bare skin meets contaminated areas. The Verruca virus is often found on the surfaces of communal areas such as swimming pools, gyms and changing rooms. HPV's are only caught if a person walks on a contaminated surface with an open lesion, however sometimes these lesions may not be apparent or obvious. Although harmless, verrucae's can be painful, uncomfortable and unsightly which may cause embarrassment.

How to prevent catching Verrucae:

- If you are aware of small cuts/lesions wear a verruca guarding socks in swimming pools and changing rooms
- Do NOT share towels
- Change socks regularly

How to treat Verrucae:

Your body's own immune system will usually fight off the virus overtime, however this could take from a few months to years. Some verrucae's can be treated at home however, some can be stubborn and require some assistance.

Start off with using an over the counter verruca ointment. However, it's important to protect the surrounding skin as it can kill healthy skin cells.

- File down the verruca first before applying the treatment. This makes it easier for the ointment to penetrate the skin to get to the virus. Apply a small layer of vaseline around the verruca before applying the ointment to protect the surrounding healthy skin.

Ace Feet in Motion - What we do?

If your immune system has failed to respond to treatment at home you may want to consider booking in for an appointment with our specialist HCPC registered Podiatrist Fay who will discuss the following options with you:

- Debridement and application of a chemical (caustic) that kills the verruca virus.
- Verruca needling – we also offer verruca needling treatment, which entails a local anaesthetic around the side of the verruca and using a needle to trigger an immune response.

