

# Footcare Tips for Older Adults

Research shows that our quality of life is directly related to our ability to stay active and nothing is more important to remaining active than maintaining the health of our feet. Simple, regular self footcare and proper footwear choices can go a long way in keeping our feet healthy.

## Foot Hygiene

The single most important thing one can do for foot health is good foot hygiene. This means washing the feet daily, wearing clean socks and caring for the skin and nails on a regular basis.

## Skin Care

The skin of the feet must be resilient enough to withstand thousands of footsteps each day. Bathing the feet daily, applying moisturizing lotions to dry skin and managing calluses with lotions and a pumice stone helps our skin hold up to the demands of an active lifestyle. Never ignore rashes, painful calluses or skin that is red or tender as this can be a sign of infection. For those whose feet sweat excessively, foot powders and socks with less than 30% cotton are best for keeping the skin dry.

## Nail Care

Toenails tend to become thicker, discolored and more brittle as we age. This can make it more difficult to trim the nails and contribute to painful nail conditions such as ingrown nails or fungal nails. Nails should be trimmed straight across and rough edges or nail thickness should be reduced with a nail file.

## Footwear

For those who are vulnerable to foot pain whether from arthritis, previous injuries or toe alignment issues such as bunions or hammertoes, it is imperative that you wear shoes that fit well, provide proper support and are not excessively worn. Poorly fitting shoes contribute to many of the most common causes of foot pain. Take the time to visit a reputable footwear retailer and spend the time necessary selecting a comfortable, supportive pair of shoes.

Do not overlook the importance of footwear for at-home use. Flimsy slippers or flip flops may not provide enough protection and support for those with foot pain when they are at home.

## Falling Risk and Your Feet

Risk factors for falls include: poorly fitting shoes, shoes with elevated heel height, excessively worn shoes, sandals or shoes with an unsecured heel.

Excerpted from *GREAT FEET FOR LIFE: FOOTCARE AND FOOTWEAR FOR HEALTHY AGING* by Paul Langer, DPM  
[www.greatfeetforlife.com](http://www.greatfeetforlife.com)