

In This Issue

[New Year, Strong Feet](#)
[Holiday Mid-Year Foot Check](#)
[Winter Activities](#)
[Tips for Cold Weather Diabetic Feet](#)

Celebrate the New Year with Strong Feet

The New Year is a time many have made goals for the year ahead and most resolutions start in the gym. Keep your feet safe in the new year with these tips:

The Right Shoes

Well-fitting athletic shoes are a must for any sport or exercise. If shoes don't properly fit, support the foot's arch or provide proper heel cushion, they can cause heel pain or plantar fasciitis. Shoes that don't fit well can cause a neuroma (nerve thickening/inflammation) or toenail injuries. These injuries can require treatment with your foot and ankle surgeon including injections, medication or physical therapy. Moisture-wicking socks can be helpful too. They can prevent blisters and athlete's foot, which could lead to more serious issues if they become infected.

Start Small

Slowly increasing your stamina and length of your workout can reduce the risk of overuse injuries including stress fractures or tendon injuries. Stretching your muscles before and after the workout will help to warm up and cool down the muscles preventing further harm.

Hone Your Technique

Improper exercise technique can lead to ligament or tendon injury in feet and ankles. Bad posture or misuse of exercise equipment can throw off stabilization of the foot and ankle leading to sprains or muscle strains.

Watch Out for Bacteria

Along with stress relief, gyms also bring with them sweaty shoes, public showers, exercise equipment and pool decks—all of which are a breeding



ground for hidden bacteria. Avoid any additional germs by avoiding barefoot walking in public areas. Wear water shoes in areas with wet surfaces and cover any cuts, cracks or ingrown toenails as tears in the skin's surface are an entry point for bacteria.

If your feet and ankles hurt while exercising, or if you suffer a foot and ankle injury, schedule an appointment with a foot and ankle surgeon as soon as possible to have it evaluated. Visit [FootHealthFacts.org](https://www.foothealthfacts.org) to find one in your area.

'Tis the Season for a Mid-Year Foot Check



The school year is halfway over, and it's a perfect time to check your child's feet. Did you know that a child's feet can grow up to two sizes in six months? Now is a perfect time to make sure their shoes still fit properly. Signs that shoes are too tight include blisters on the back of heels, corns, calluses on toes and ingrown toenails.

Winter is also a great time to check shoes for any wear and tear since this causes them to lose shock absorption over time. If it's time to buy new shoes for your child, choose a pair that has a little—but not too much—room for growth. For the best fit, aim for about a finger's width

of space between your child's longest toe and the front of the shoe. Be careful not to buy shoes that are too big as oversized shoes can cause feet to slide forward and put pressure on the toes. The shoes should have a toe box wide enough to accommodate your child's feet and give enough cushioning and shock absorption. If your child has flat feet, look for shoes that provide them with arch support.

Make an appointment with your foot and ankle surgeon if your child has any issues walking or experiences any pain despite properly fitting shoes. Visit [FootHealthFacts.org](https://www.foothealthfacts.org) to find one near you.

Staying Active for Winter Activities

Just because it's cold doesn't mean you should stop being active. Winter is a great time for many cold-weather activities including skiing and ice skating. Here are tips to keep these winter activities safe for the entire family.

- **Boots and skis should fit properly and be laced up tightly to give your ankle proper support.**
- **If you haven't skied in a while, begin exercises a couple weeks before the ski outing to condition and strengthen your muscles. A foot and ankle surgeon can give you specific stretches and exercises to get you in proper shape before you hit the slopes.**
- **Always enjoy your winter sports with a friend. In the event of an accident or injury, you will have someone there to seek help immediately.**

If you happen to suffer an injury while out and about this winter, contact a foot and ankle surgeon for an immediate consultation. Injuries can worsen if left untreated and even turn into chronic ankle instability, arthritis, tissue damage or foot alignment problems.

Before hitting the slopes or ice rink this year, visit [FootHealthFacts.org](https://www.foothealthfacts.org) for safety and injury-prevention tips or to find a foot and ankle surgeon in your area.



Cold Weather Tips for Diabetic Feet

Winter can be dangerous for your feet if you are living with diabetes. The combination of colder temperatures, poor blood circulation and possible nerve damage in your extremities make your feet vulnerable to infection, complications, or even possible amputation. Here are some ways to make sure your feet stay healthy throughout the season:

1. Be careful with direct heat on your feet. As the weather dips, everyday activities such as warming your feet by a fire or cranking up the heat on your feet in the car can create issues. With numbness caused by nerve damage, you aren't able to feel when your feet get too hot, which could result in second- or third-degree burns on your feet. The best way to avoid burning your feet is to avoid direct heat, including warming aids, such as electric blankets, heated shoe inserts or heating pads, and do not put your feet in hot water. Bath water should always be tested with your hands or a thermometer before putting your feet in. A foot and ankle surgeon can also recommend moisture-wicking socks that will keep your feet dry and warm.

2. Keep your feet moisturized! Use a daily moisturizer to keep dry skin from itching or cracking. Moisturizing between your toes can lead to fungal infection, so avoid that area when applying lotion.

3. Wear properly-fitting shoes with supportive soles and a wide toe box to reduce foot cramping. In the colder weather, think about the sock's texture and thickness and how it may affect walking conditions to avoid any cramping or even trips or falls.

4. Visit a foot and ankle surgeon to regularly examine your feet. Foot and ankle surgeons can help detect any diabetes-related foot issues early before they become problematic.

5. Keep your feet dry. Moisture that collects between your socks and your feet and toes can form bacteria, which can lead to infection. If your shoes are soaked from snow and slush, change out of your wet socks and shoes as soon as possible and towel dry your feet, paying close attention to the area between your toes.

Get more tips on how to care for diabetic feet this winter at [FootHealthFacts.org](https://www.foothealthfacts.org), where you can also find a foot and ankle surgeon near you.

