

Fixing your feet

by John Vonhof (1997)

Find what works for you, but try it in training first. Never ignore an injury. Carrying heavy loads (backpack) increases the likelihood of blisters (train in race conditions). Calluses & spurs occur when joints are out of alignment. **Most injuries are by doing too much, too soon & too fast.** Avoid sidewalks (too hard) & slanted surfaces. Go to a specialized running store to get analyzed for the right shoe. Each 3.5 oz off of a pair of hiking boots will add about a mile to a day's hiking progress. If you remove the insert from the shoe to check shoe size, it should be about an inch longer than your foot. Buy comfortable shoes that fit correctly.

Heat, moisture & friction lead to blisters. Remove any one of them & eliminate the blister. Trim toenails. Apply Vaseline (or powder, but not both) at each change of socks every 4 hrs. Try two pairs of socks to keep friction off your skin. Do not use cotton socks. Seal-skin socks keep feet dry, but allow them to breathe. Apply Tuf-skin then duct-tape (add tissue over an existing blister to prevent a rip-off) at blister prone areas (then cover with powder). If your feet sweat profusely, use anti-perspirant. Gaiters help keep rocks out of shoe.

Change socks when they get wet. Have a foot-care kit (one in car & a small one in pack). Drain blister with pin holes near base; cover with donut-shaped moleskin, gauze & tape. If you feel your foot starting to roll over, quickly transfer your weight to the other foot. Treat sprained ankles with RICE (**rest, ice, compression & elevate**). Only ice 20 minutes at a time. Do not use heat for a week after injury. Slowly build back into your routine. Balancing on one foot strengthens your ankles (harder with eyes closed).

Plantar fasciitis is when the tendons in the arch of the foot are inflamed. Going barefoot is the worst thing you can do when this happens. Rolling a tennis ball under arch is the best. Stop running when the Achilles tendon is hurt. When toenails are too long it causes black toenails; when too short it causes ingrown toenails (wear shoes with a big toe-box). Use creams & files to get rid of calluses. A bunion is a form of arthritis (this widens foot & lowers arch).

Athlete's foot is a skin fungus (noted with itching). Keep feet clean & dry with anti-fungal creams, foot powder & change socks often. Plantar warts are viral infections that need oxygen (suffocate it with duct tape). Creams = bag balm, body glide, lanolin, Vaseline. Powders = baby powder, cornstarch, Gold bond, Zeasorb. Tape adherents = Tuf-skin, tincture of benzoin, rubbing alcohol. Tapes = duct, Elastikon, 3M.

Foot care kits should include: duct tape, moleskin, pin (to drain blister), alcohol wipes, Vaseline, Tuf-skin, powder, toenail clippers, nail file, pumice stone, tincture of benzoin, pocket knife, scissors, gauze, extra socks

The John Muir Trail is 211 miles long.

Quotes:

"When you don't take care of your feet during a long run or race, each step becomes a reminder of your ignorance." (Dave Scott)