

SAVE YOUR FEET



Stay on your toes with the latest foot tips and treatments, and you can wear the latest shoe trends—with less pain

BY LESLIE PEPPER

WHERE DOES IT HURT?

To soothe tired and achy feet, prop them up on a pillow, ice sore areas for 20 minutes at a time, and take aspirin or ibuprofen. If specific areas hurt, try the following:

BURNING BALLS OF FEET

Stilettos pitch your weight forward—three-inch heels, for example, put seven times more pressure on the front of your feet than one-inch heels.

■ **What you can do:** Reduce your heel height for a while. Cushion feet with an over-the-counter metatarsal pad (like Dr. Scholl's Gel Ball of Foot Cushions) or a custom orthotic. Bring down swelling with cortisone injections.

■ **Newest treatments:** Some podiatrists are injecting feet with collagen to plump up fat pads and make it easier to tiptoe around in heels. Another technology involves aiming a laser at the area to stimulate collagen production. However, many experts are skeptical about these methods' safety and effectiveness.

ACHY HEELS

Stilettos can cause your feet to strike the ground at an odd angle when you walk, straining heels and arches.

■ **What you can do:** Stretch your calves daily and add ultra-thin pads inside your

■ **Newest treatment:** The FDA recently approved a new device that uses shock waves to break up inflammation.

SORE ANKLES AND CALVES

Strutting around in spiked heels every day can shorten your Achilles tendons and over-tighten calf and ankle muscles.

■ **What you can do:** Switch to one-inch heels (not flat shoes) whenever possible, so there's less strain on your heel cords. Stretch calf muscles daily.

■ **Newest treatments:** Electrical muscle stimulation and ultrasound treatments can help increase circulation and relax sore muscles—for about \$75 per session.

PAIN UNDER YOUR TOES

High heels slide feet forward, which can jam toes and lead to pinched nerves.

■ **What you can do:** Wear shoes or open sandals that give your toes more wiggle room and a pad for extra cushioning.

■ **Newest treatment:** Alcohol-solution injections can shrink inflamed nerves.

THE BEST WAY TO TREAT A...

CALLUS Soak in warm water with a chamomile tea bag, then buff away with a pumice. Rub on lotion and wear socks to bed. Don't cut a callus; it could get infected.

CORN Soak in water, then tape on a slice of pineapple and cover with a sock overnight—the enzymes will soften dead skin. Avoid corn pads with salicylic acid—they irritate skin. Use non-medicated cushions.

BLISTER Apply antibiotic ointment and cover with a bandage. Never pop a blister; it could cause infection.

BUNION Use bunion pads and try to wear shoes with roomy toe boxes.

HAMMERTOE Wear shoes or sandals with more wiggle room to keep toes from curling under.

● If these tips don't bring relief, see a podiatrist or an orthopedic surgeon.

STILETTO SURVIVAL TIPS

● Replace plastic heel tips with rubber ones for greater traction and comfort.

● Have toe boxes of shoes stretched.

● Try not to stand in heels for more than three hours at a time. Stash comfortable shoes under your desk to give feet a rest.