



Healthy feet are key to staying active, fit and free of chronic, painful foot problems that slow you down. These basic self-care tips are sure to help you stay in step for the miles ahead.

Only wear shoes that fit well and allow your feet to function normally. The right shoes will provide support and comfort for your feet, legs and back. Well-fitted shoes can help prevent blisters, bunions and chronic pain in the heel, arch and forefoot.

>> **Bad news shoes: High heels** can cause foot and leg problems by cramping the toes and applying added pressure to the ball of the foot. **Flip flops** lack stability, arch support and cushioning.

Notice changes in your feet. Don't delay reporting symptoms to your health care provider, such as worsening pain in your arch and heel (**plantar fasciitis**), a large bump at the joint of a big toe (**bunion**) and curling toes (**hammer toes**). All should be reported.

Don't walk barefoot. Footwear helps you avoid foot injuries such as bumps, jams and cuts, which can lead to infections and even insect bites or stings.

Practice foot hygiene. Wash your feet and toenails daily. Use a pumice stone to smooth out callused areas. Trim your toenails straight across, but not too short.

>> **For people with diabetes:** Professional foot care is critical to avoiding serious foot problems worsened by nerve damage. Always wear shoes to avoid injuries. Make sure your provider routinely checks your feet for injury or infection. Check your feet daily to spot any new sores or areas that are slow to heal.

“Good health is not something we can buy. However, it can be an extremely valuable savings account.” – Anne Wilson Schaefer

Standing Fit at Work

Standing is part of the job for many workers. Standing all day in place can cause fatigue, swollen feet and legs, back pain and stiffness – the same problems that also plague sit-down workers. To feel better at work:

- **Change positions frequently.** Walk around, stretch and stand in different positions. Use breaks to walk around. Movement is key to easing the strain of staying stationary on your feet.
- **Build fitness.** Fit in 2 to 3 strength training sessions per week to increase your stamina.
- **Take stretching breaks.** Throughout your workday stretch your shoulders, back, hips, legs and feet. If your job requires a lot of repeated actions or positions, stretch yourself the opposite way to relieve the rigors of the job.



>> *Continued on the other side.*



Vitamins for Everyone

Vitamins are vital to healthy cells as well as the normal growth and function of our bodies.

How do you know if your diet is supplying enough of the right stuff? Why not just rely on vitamin supplements? Most health authorities recommend getting vitamins from food rather than supplements, with some exceptions, including pregnant women, seniors or others at risk for specific shortages.

So what's the best nutritional strategy for promoting optimal health?
Eat balanced meals with choices from all the food groups.

If you're concerned that you may come up short on some nutrients, your health care provider can help you make changes to meet your needs.

To learn more about vitamins, visit MedlinePlus' vitamins page at www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/vitamins.html.

Standing Fit at Work

>> *Continued from the other side.*

- **Watch your posture.** Maintaining the natural curves of your spine – a bit like an S from the side – reduces fatigue and muscle strain.



Standing Posture Checklist

- ✓ Place your feet shoulder-width apart.
- ✓ Don't over-straighten your knees.
- ✓ Keep your head upright and chin slightly elevated.
- ✓ Keep shoulders down and back to avoid hunching.

More comfort solutions for upright workers:

Use anti-fatigue mats and footrests (a step stool or an overturned trash can). Relax in a warm bath. Massage your feet, toes and legs regularly.

Q: How to prepare for surgery?

A: Before surgery, you may have many questions.

First, contact your health plan to determine preauthorization for the procedure.

Be sure you understand the procedure and how it will help you. Find out if you have any nonsurgical options for avoiding the procedure. Ask how long the procedure and recovery take and about any complications that may occur.

Know in advance what type of anesthesia is recommended. Also, ask how many times your surgeon has done the procedure.

Ask your health care provider well in advance of the surgery what you can do to prepare physically, such as quitting smoking, any dietary changes or medications to avoid.

Arrange to have someone pick you up and drive you home when you are discharged from surgery. You may also need to plan ahead to have help at home.

– Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FFAFP

Recent research published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* showed that nearly 1 out of 3 people never get their prescriptions filled. Cost is a concern but the other seems to be the doctor-patient relationship. People who knew their health care provider well were more likely to get the meds and stay on them. **Bottom line:** Develop a good rapport with your provider and if you don't plan on taking your prescribed medication, make sure your provider knows. – Zorba Paster, MD



Stay Cool With No-Cook Meals

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

When the temperature soars outdoors, you may not want to turn on your oven and add heat inside. Keep it cool by opting for a dinner menu that requires no cooking.

Chill out with cool soups. From cold cherry soup to cucumber-based gazpacho, chilled soups are the perfect way to cool down on a hot day. Plus, they help you add more vegetables and fruit to your diet.

Salads reign supreme. For a simple, refreshing dinner on a hot evening, nothing beats salad – and your options are endless. Stock up on mixed greens, cucumbers, tomatoes, carrots, avocados, mushrooms, peppers and fruits such as strawberries and sliced apples. And don't forget protein. Fill your pantry with cans of tuna, salmon, chickpeas and lentils – they're all protein-rich, no-cook salad toppers.

Wrap it up. Pack salad ingredients into a whole-grain wheat or corn tortilla for an easy sandwich. Add low-fat cheese, sodium-reduced turkey breast deli slices or store-bought rotisserie chicken without the skin.

Company coming? No need to turn on the stove. Serve a chilled shrimp ring with some zesty salsa. Or offer guests an elegant cheese tray with whole-grain crackers, assorted nuts and fruit. Vegetables and dip are another no-fuss option.

To add no-calorie, fat-free flavor, add fresh herbs to your meals. Mint, parsley, coriander and basil are perfect for soups, sandwiches and salads.



Family mealtime can encourage healthful eating for everyone at the table. Plan to eat dinner or breakfast as a family at least 4 to 5 times a week. Turn off the TV, phones and other electronic devices and enjoy mealtime conversation. Invite kids to help with meal planning. For more tips, visit Kids Eat Right at www.eatright.org/kids/.



Smart Moves toolkit is at www.personalbest.com/extras/July14tools.

Next Month: TLC For Your Knees