



## Suffolk Podiatry

### Basic Footcare

#### The Importance of caring for your feet

Your feet can be looked on as items of machinery that enable you to get about. Like any other piece of equipment, they need to be kept in good working order. The majority of foot problems are the result of failing to look after our feet properly.

Exercise is a good way of keeping your feet and joints mobile and improving circulation. To refresh feet, massage gently with a foot roller, or ask your partner to massage your feet.

#### Follow a simple daily routine

Prevention is better than a cure, so keep your feet healthy by following a regular routine:

- Wash your feet daily, but don't soak them for too long as you may dry out the natural oils in your skin. Dry them carefully, particularly between the toes
- Apply a moisturiser to keep the skin supple and in good condition. Avoid applying between the toes
- Check your feet for problems (see section below)

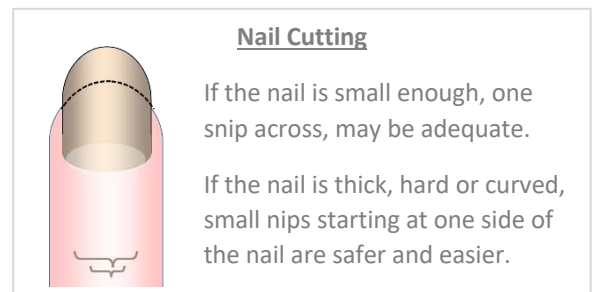
#### Get Familiar with your feet

If you are familiar with how your feet look, you can then recognise any changes and act promptly. Find a time to inspect your feet each day and make this a part of your everyday routine. If you are unable to see your feet ask a friend or relative to check them regularly for you – particularly if you have diabetes or circulation problems. If need be, use a mirror to check the bottom of your feet. Contact your doctor, practice nurse or podiatrist straight away if you notice any changes in how your feet look. Seek prompt treatment for burns, cuts and breaks in the skin, and for any unusual changes in colour or temperature.

#### Nail care

You should use proper equipment to cut your nails. These should include a pair of nail clippers, and also a file to smooth the nails after trimming. You can get these from your local chemist or off the internet.

To prevent the spread of infection, you should keep the nail clippers and nail file for your own personal use only. You should clean them after use with a disinfectant wipe.



Suffolk Podiatry  
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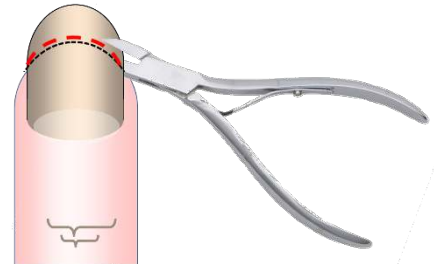
If your nails are particularly hard, you may find it helpful to soak your feet in warm water for about 10 minutes beforehand.

Use nail clippers to cut the nails following the shape of the end of the toe. If you cut straight across you may leave a sharp right-angled piece at the edge. Avoid cutting down the sides of the nail as this may lead to an ingrowing toe nail. If it is very painful down the side of the nail you should seek the help of a private podiatrist. You can check whether a private podiatrist is properly qualified by looking on the HCPC website: <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/>

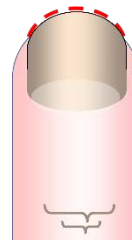
After cutting your toe nails, you should smooth off any sharp edges with a file or emery board. Take care to file away from you.

If you cannot cut your nails yourself, you could try filing them once a week to keep them short. Or try asking a family member or friend to cut them. Alternatively, you can seek the help of a private podiatrist.

Work across the nail and use small nips



File any sharp edges to prevent the nail piercing the adjacent toe



Always cut the nail following the shape of the toe. **Do not probe down the sides** of the nails or cut the nail too short.

## Footwear

Never walk barefoot as it is possible to damage your feet without knowing. You should also make sure your footwear fits well as many foot problems can be directly related to poor-fitting shoes or socks. Lace up or Velcro fastenings give more support than slip-on shoes. For more information see our advice sheet *Footwear Advice* on the Suffolk GP Federation website.