

Assess Your Foot Health for Happy Feet

Every day you depend on your feet to live, work, and play. The average person takes about 10,000 steps a day, which adds up to more than 3 million steps per year. This amounts to a lot of stress and strain on your feet and ankles. That's why it is important to assess your foot health regularly and catch problems early.

Here are five easy steps to examine your feet and ankles.



1

Check the appearance of your feet and ankles.

Look for things like swelling, discoloration of the skin or nails, blisters, excessive calluses, and changes to the shape of your foot. Be sure to examine the soles of your feet and the space between the toes. If something has changed or looks suspicious, it's time to make an appointment with your foot and ankle orthopaedic surgeon.

2

Assess the blood flow.

Press down on the nail of your big toe until the color fades, about 5 seconds. Then let go and allow the blood flow to return to your toe. If you have average circulation, the return of normal color to your toe should take 2-5 seconds.

3

Test your foot and ankle function and flexibility.

Try to pick up a marble or small dishtowel with just your toes to assess their flexibility. To test your ankle flexibility, stand on a stair while facing up the staircase. Hang your heel over the edge and let it go below the level of the stair. If this causes pain, stop the test. If your heel goes below the level of the stair without causing strain in your calf, your flexibility level is excellent. If there is some strain, you can correct it with flexibility exercises.

4

Evaluate sensation.

Take a pencil eraser and run it on the top, bottom, and both sides of your feet. The sensation should feel the same on all sides of the foot. It may tickle on the bottom of the foot, which is normal. If you lack sensation in one area, repeat the test over the next few days. If you get the same result, talk to a foot and ankle orthopaedic surgeon.

5

Examine your level of pain.

There should be no pain in the average, uninjured foot. If you do have pain, make sure to feel the parts of your foot to locate the exact position and source of the pain. If the pain persists for more than a few days, make an appointment with your foot and ankle orthopaedic surgeon.

FOOT AND ANKLE ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS

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