

# FOOTNOTES 2009

NEWS YOU CAN USE FOR WINTER 2009

## Stay trim and comfortable in the New Year

You're raring to exercise, lose weight and stick to your New Year's resolutions. When you hit the gym for a good workout, though, a sharp pain shoots through your heel, or your feet become tender, numb or painful.

How can you exercise when your feet are aching? We see many exercisers with foot pain after every round of New Year's resolutions. Here are some tips for avoiding it.

If you feel a sharp, stabbing pain when you get out of bed or stand up, you likely have plantar fasciitis. That's an inflammation of a band of tissue on the bottom of the feet. To prevent it, wear athletic shoes that support the arch and cushion the heel, or try orthotics. Your

shoes should be designed for the sport.

If you feel pain in the ball of your foot or tingling in the third and fourth toes, you may have a neuroma, which is a pinched nerve. They're generally caused by wearing shoes that are too tight. Get your feet measured and wear the proper size in both athletic and everyday footwear.

If the backs of your feet feel tender and painful, your burst of exercise may have strained the Achilles tendon. Be sure to warm up for your workout and start new exercise routines gradually. Sports trainers recommend increasing your exercise intensity by only 10 percent a week. If you do develop



Achilles tendonitis, use rest, ice, compression and elevation (R.I.C.E.).

If pain from any of these conditions continues for more than five days, call our office for an appointment. We can evaluate your condition, take steps to avoid future complications and offer pain relief. 🌱

## Do a mid-year checkup on your child's feet

Children will be thrilled to know they've made it halfway through the school year. Their shoes have also made it through half the year, and it may be time for a new pair.

Children's feet can grow up to two sizes in six months. If you suspect your children's growth has made their shoes too tight, check for blisters, corns and calluses on the toes, blisters on the back of the heels or ingrown toenails.

Check the shoes for wear and tear, too. Shoes lose their shock absorption over time.

If it's time to buy new shoes, choose a pair that has a little, but not too much, room for growth. Shoot for about a finger's width of space between your child's big toe and the front of the shoe. Don't buy shoes too big, however. Oversized shoes cause the foot to slide forward, putting pressure on the toes.

Be sure the shoes have a toe box wide enough to accommodate your child's feet, adequate cushioning and shock absorption. Children with flat feet also need shoes that provide arch support.

If your child is having trouble walking or running or is experiencing foot pain despite properly fitting shoes, call our office for a checkup. 🌱

# Heat things up with winter sports

Skiing at a resort or gliding across an indoor ice rink make for great winter recreation. Use caution in winter sports, though, so you can finish the day with hot cocoa instead of a cast and crutches.

Beginning ice skaters experience a lot of falls. When that happens, tendons can sprain or tear. Even experienced skaters can fracture an ankle.

Downhill skiers, cross-country skiers and snowboarders also risk injuries to their feet and ankles, including sprains, fractures and dislocations.

If you do get injured, let our office check it out. It may be a sprain or a fracture, and it's important to get medical treatment promptly for both conditions. An ankle sprain could

lead to chronic ankle instability if left untreated. If it's a fracture, you don't want the bones to start healing if they aren't aligned properly.

If an x-ray shows you don't have a fracture, you may still have stretched a tendon or injured a joint. These may worsen without proper treatment and could cause arthritis, tissue damage and problems with foot alignment. We can help you head off these complications.

Follow these tips to help prevent injuries:

- Make sure skates, ski boots or snowboard boots fit properly. Lace up ice skates tightly enough to give your ankle proper support.



- If you haven't engaged in this sport since last winter, start two weeks ahead of time doing specific exercises to condition the muscles used in that sport. You can find conditioning and warm-up exercises and resources by doing an Internet search. 🏂