

Summer Foot Care Guide

By [Ronni](#) August 2, 2013 in [Ask the Professional](#), [Health](#)

Find out how to maintain healthy feet and prevent future troubles with this expert advice.

by **Ronni Rowland**

Feet. While feet take a beating no matter where you live, Shanghai brings its own special conditions that can work against your feet. This summer foot care guide offers some helpful tips for maintaining healthy, happy feet...now and in the future.



Beat the Heat

Shanghai's high humidity is a factor that's fighting your feet since bacteria and fungi thrive in wet, damp areas. It's not uncommon for people to wear shoes for over twelve hours a day. The warmth and humidity in the environment combined with confinement in a damp shoe leads to a variety of fungal and other infections.

The solution? Get out of those shoes and go barefoot. Even though the common practice in China is to go straight from shoes to flip-flops or slippers while at home—give your feet a break and bare them to the air.

Another helpful tip is to rotate shoes frequently to allow your shoes to dry out. Shoe rotation also prevents blistering and repetitive strain on the same muscles and bones day after day.

Tidy Toes

Expats—both women and men—are often found enjoying the plethora of inexpensive pedicure services available throughout the city. Unfortunately, fungal infections are often linked to these visits to the salon.

Be sure that tools and basins are properly sterilized and that staff wash their hands between clients.

Standard pedicure techniques can also make feet vulnerable to infection. Pedicurists often dig deep around the nail and scrape off sulci, removing important barriers to bacteria and other impurities in the outside environment. Request instead that the toenails be cut straight across, with only the corners being filed.

Shoes Blues

Take a look at the feet around you and you'll find a stunning variety of shoes. Flip-flops. Strappy wedges. Spiked heels. Trendy trainers. The types of shoes we wear play an important role in current and long-term foot health...and they have a direct link with patient symptoms:

- Flip-flops: Can lead to fallen arches and flat feet
- Wedges: Can cause calluses, corns and problems with the ball of the foot
- High heels: Can result in heel pain and hammer toes
- Sneakers & trainers: Can cause blistering and athlete's foot



Vaishali Patel, Podiatric Consultant, encourages people to "listen" to their feet. They are telling you, "I'm a happy foot. I'm not in pain." When people ignore the first signs of foot trouble, more serious problems result...and some can be difficult to reverse.

Try these top tips for maintaining healthy feet:

1. Avoid walking barefoot in public areas.
2. Only wear flip-flops for short periods of time.
3. Wear a fresh pair of dry socks everyday (70% cotton recommended).
4. Wear comfortable, supportive shoes.
5. Feet swell in the heat, so wear shoes with adjustable laces or straps.
6. Expose your feet to the air, and spend some time barefoot everyday.
7. Trim toenails straight, filing only the corners.
8. Regularly clean and moisturize your feet everyday.
9. Gently remove hard skin and cracked heels.
10. See a professional when experiencing foot pain...for removal of deep, hard calluses...and for an evaluation of foot health.

Expert advice provided by [Vaishali Patel](#), Podiatric Consultant.