

Looking after Feet

Feet Care

Looking after feet (footcare) and treating common foot problems can help to prevent problems that make you unsteady on your feet and at risk of a fall.

It can also reduce pain or discomfort, and improve your confidence, independence, and energy levels. Wearing footwear that's comfortable, fits well and is in good repair can also help to prevent falls and behaviours of concern.

Personal footcare is part of personal hygiene and covers a set of tasks. Footcare includes toenail care, skin care and checking footwear.

You can look after the skin on your feet by:

- smoothing dry or hard skin using a foot file or pumice stone
- keeping feet clean, dry - especially between your toes
- keeping feet comfortable and warm
- checking for cracks and breaks in the skin
- moisturising dry skin with foot balm that has urea as the main ingredient (but do not apply cream between your toes)
- looking for signs of infection or other obvious early problems

Foot spa's

Foot spa's are an excellent way of caring for feet. Offering a foot spa during the evening as part of the sleep hygiene routine using a few drops of lavender will keep the feet soft. Also ensure the feet are completely dry afterwards and especially between the toes.

Foot spa's are also a good way of introducing individuals getting used to having their feet touched. This desensitising process gradually encourages acceptance in readiness for nail care.



Footwear

As well as caring for your feet, you should check your footwear is comfortable, well fitting, and in good condition

A good shoe should support and protect your foot and allow natural movement during walking. Poorly fitting shoes can cause foot problems - such as corns, calluses, bunions and ingrown toenails.

Socks and tights

Socks should contain a high proportion of natural materials - such as cotton or wool - as this allows sweat to evaporate from the skin. As a rule, wear wool in winter for warmth and cotton to keep you cool during the summer.

When dressing, make sure your socks and tights aren't too tight, or pulled up too high that they cut into the skin or restrict the circulation. You should also avoid walking on slippery surfaces - such as polished floors or tiles - in socks or tights.

Slippers

You should replace your slippers regularly as they become worn and loose over time.

When replacing your slippers, try to avoid slippers:

- without straps, laces or backs
- with high or narrow heels

Slippers should only be worn for short periods, and shouldn't be worn all day as regular footwear.