



Natural Solutions to Common Foot Problems



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Meet Dr. Dawn Olsen Figlo



I'm Dr. Dawn Olsen Figlo, a twenty-plus-year veteran Podiatrist and Foot Surgeon who believes in empowering individuals with transformative natural solutions that focus on the foot.

The Organic Foot was born after years of practice when I realized the “root” of common foot problems and discovered that my natural solutions generate overall well-being.

Health and happiness are the results of The Organic Footpath. I invite YOU to walk with me and explore natural, ancient, and Eastern medicinal practices. Often, we need to look back to heal the present and look down to heal our way up.

Topics

- Plantar Fasciitis
- Bunions
- Toenail Fungus
- Gout
- Corns & Calluses
- Achilles Tendonitis
- Hammertoes
- Athlete's Foot Infection
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Plantar Fasciitis

Oh, my painful heel! Plantar fasciitis is one of the most common reasons someone visits a Podiatrist. The plantar is the foot's bottom surface, and the fascia is a thick tendonous band that extends from the heel to the ball of the foot. Symptoms commonly include pain in the heel where the fascia inserts onto the heel bone. The symptoms are due to acute inflammation from an injury. Often, it hurts worse when first standing in the morning and after periods of rest.



Try these natural tools that relieve inflammation and decrease pain.

- Provide arch support. Custom orthotics (arch supports) are the best, but firm over-the-counter arch supports can also be helpful. The arch support should be reasonably firm so it doesn't collapse with body weight. Arches are a better option than heel cups and heel cushions.
- Epsom Salt Soaks: Soak in Epsom salt and warm water for 20 minutes daily.
- Ice is a natural anti-inflammatory and anesthetic. Apply for 20 minutes when the pain is acute.

- Essential Oils: Apply Deep Blue blend topically to heel three times a day. Take Copaiba internally as directed (I recommend the soft gels), and add Frankincense to deep blue for additional relief.
- Stretching: Stretch gently by pulling the toes down and holding for at least 30 seconds. Before getting out of bed in the morning is best.
- Arch band. Apply daily in combination with arch support.
- For severe cases, I recommend night splints.
- Earthing: Place feet on the earth (dirt, grass, sand, or concrete) for at least 20 minutes a day, or use an indoor grounding device.

*Avoid walking barefoot or in shoes without an arch while you have this condition.

*Note: shoes without arches may be the culprit!

BUNIONS

Yikes! That protrusion at the base of the big toe is a bunion! They are unsightly and can be painful. Bunions result from a deviation in the first metatarsal bone and additional bone build-up at the metatarsal head. The 'bump' can become inflamed and red (bursitis), and there is often arthritis affiliated with the big toe joint (metatarsal phalangeal joint). Like many other pedal deformities, bunions can be caused by the arch collapsing and the foot being out of alignment. When this occurs, the big toe joint cannot move as freely as needed during the toe-off part of the gait cycle, influencing a bunion's development. Finding shoes that are pain-free and can accommodate the deformity is a challenge. Pointy, narrow shoes, and foot type can also be attributed to bunion development.



Here are some natural ways to improve this condition:

- Strengthen the foot with exercises such as toe and heel raises, yoga, and walking barefoot in safe environments.
- When inflamed, soak with Epsom salt and warm water for 20-minute periods.
- Essential oils that can ease the discomfort are wintergreen, deep blue blend, copaiba, and eucalyptus. Use individually or as a blend.
- Choose shoes with a wide-toe box.
- Custom orthotics or OTC arch supports. Note: accommodations to aid the big toe joint can be built into custom orthotics (arches).

- Range of motion exercises. If the big toe has deviated toward the second toe, straighten the big toe out and move it up and down dorsiflexion and plantarflexion. Do this up to 20 times a few times a day.
- Bunion splints can be helpful to wear during the night.
- Earthing: Placing your feet in direct contact with the earth or using an indoor earthing pad. Earthing is a natural way to decrease pain and inflammation.

*Avoid wearing pointy shoes with a narrow toe box.



Toenail Fungus

The Fungus is among us! I just had to! Onychomycosis is the fancy term for toenail fungus. It affects a substantial percentage of the population because fungus is in our environment. Reports claim that almost 20% of the population has it. Toenail fungus is unsightly and can be quite painful. The nails grow in thickness and are usually discolored, and can be foul-smelling. Athlete's foot infection can increase your risk as well as pedicures.



Let's talk about some natural solutions:

- Keep nails short.
- File down the top of the nail if thickness has occurred.
- Soak with Epsom salt and tea tree oil daily for 20 minutes.
- Apply On Guard essential oil blend and Tea tree touch (diluted) alternating between the two. Cover with Band-Aid after application. Let air at night.
- Apply Tea tree to shoes 1-2 drops 2-3 times a week. Treating your toenails without treating your shoes is a mistake. It's easy to get reinfected.

*Avoid cutting cuticles when getting pedicures and always make sure nail tools are sterile. If you paint your toenails frequently, make sure you allow for months of no polish.

* Eat a diet that supports a healthy immune system. People with a weakened immune system are more susceptible to this infection, such as people with Diabetes.

Gout

The build-up of uric acid crystals in joints can lead to an intensely painful condition known as Gout. The most common joint to be affected is the foot's big toe joint, but it is not limited to this joint. Symptoms are a red, hot, and swollen joint that is so painful it even hurts when a sheet touches it. Gout can look similar to an infection, so when in doubt, get it checked out!



Here are some natural solutions for gout:

- Epsom salt soaks with warm water.
- Tart cherry juice and cherries.
- Consume coffee.
- Apple ice.
- Anti-inflammatory foods.
- Limit alcohol consumption.
- Essential oils: copaiba, lemongrass, wintergreen, celery seed, ginger and turmeric.

Gout can be caused by under-excreting uric acid or overproduction. Identifying what your type is will be helpful. A uric acid blood test will confirm gout but will not be accurate during an acute gout attack.

*Avoid high-purine meats such as liver, veal bacon, turkey, sardines, muscles, scallops, and trout.

*Avoid foods that cause inflammation, such as simple carbohydrates.

Corns and Calluses

Corns and calluses are a thickening of the skin produced to protect itself from friction and pressure. At first, this is an effective barrier against insult, but the build-up itself becomes painful. It can also compromise the underlying skin, which can develop an infection and sometimes a wound, especially in people with Diabetes and peripheral vascular disease.



Natural care for corns and calluses:

- Epsom salt and warm water soak. After soaking for at least 20 minutes, use a pumice stone to remove the dead tissue. Never use anything sharp.
- Keeping the skin soft in that area can be helpful. Apply fractionated coconut oil or another natural emollient.
- Essential oils: Roman chamomile, cypress, and oregano. Please note, always dilute oregano with a carrier oil such as fractionated coconut oil.
- Corn/callus pads and moleskin can act as a protective barrier to friction. Do NOT use pads with salicylic acid. They can cause a chemical burn to adjacent healthy tissue.
- If the corns are between the toes, use a toe separator so the bony prominences don't rub. Pare down corns with pumice before applying separators.
- Correct alignment with custom orthotics (arches) or over-the-counter arch supports realigning the foot and shift pressure areas.

- Strengthening the foot will also change biomechanics and shift areas of pressure. Toe raises heel raises, yoga, and walking barefoot in safe places are all beneficial.

*Avoid ill-fitting shoes and socks. A wide toe box and a shoe with extra depth are best. Also, avoid pads with salicylic acid.

Achilles Tendonitis

The most common diagnosis for pain in the back of the heel is Achilles Tendonitis. The Achilles tendon is the largest tendon in the body and attaches to the back of the heel bone. Pain can occur in the back of the calf and above the heel. Some injuries can be more severe tears, and some can even lead to a tendon rupture. An MRI is definitive in the diagnosis. The good news is that tendons can repair themselves if appropriately treated.



If your Achilles starts acting up, here are some natural remedies:

- Heel lifts. Do not confuse this with heel cups. The idea behind a lift is to create slack in the tendon. Always use heel lifts bilaterally to reduce the risk of additional injuries.
- Epsom salt and warm water soak for 20-minute sessions. You may alternate with 20 min of ice.

- Essential oils: Deep blue rub and oil, copaiba, AromaTouch blend, and lemongrass can ease the pain. Use alone or in combination with fractionated coconut oil.
- Lower extremity stretches include placing the painful foot on your lap and pulling the toes down creating slack in the Achilles. Calf stretches by standing on a step and gently lowering the heel to the floor while holding onto a railing. A towel stretch is performed by placing a towel around the ball of the foot and gently pulling the foot towards you. Stretching should be gentle. Stop if pain occurs.
- Earthing: Placing your feet in direct contact with the earth or using an indoor earthing pad. Earthing is a natural way to decrease pain and inflammation.
- When needed, I recommend tendon support, such as AchilloTrain.

*Always seek your Podiatrist if symptoms do not improve.

Hammertoes

Hammertoes are the contraction or bending of the toes caused by an imbalance in muscles/tendons. When you look down at your bare feet, and the toes are not flat on the floor, you probably have hammertoes. There are two joints in each toe except the big toe, which only has one. When one joint in the toe contracts, it's a hammertoe. The bending of both joints is a claw toe. The second toe can sometimes contract at the distal joint, called a mallet toe. The second toe can also become a hammertoe as a direct results of a bunion deformity.



Natural ways to improve hammertoes:

- Strengthen the toes. Practice picking up marbles or a towel with your toes. Heel and toe raises, yoga, and barefoot walking in safe places will also strengthen the toes. Perform passive range of motion exercises daily. Use your hands to move both joints in the toe up and down.
- Hammertoe splints and crest pads can be helpful. Wear shoes that are wide and deep. The rubbing of a hammertoe on the top of the shoe can cause corns and wounds.
- Custom orthotics (arches) & over-the-counter arch supports. Realignment changes the biomechanics of the foot and can result in the improvement of hammertoes.

- Epsom salt and warm water soak can soothe toes if they become stiff and painful.

*Avoid narrow and shallow shoes.

Athlete's Foot Infection

Scaly, red, itchy feet can be a sign of a fungal infection called Athlete's Foot. Fungal infections are common in the foot because most shoes provide a perfect environment for growth- the darkness and moisture. It can be prevalent between the toes and may cause a break in the skin, leading to a more severe cellulitis condition. A malodor can also be present, and small clear vesicles may be visible.



Natural Tips for Athlete's Foot:

- Epsom salt soaks with tea tree essential oil for 20 minutes each day.
- Soak with lukewarm green tea.
- Apply 1-2 drops of tea tree essential oil daily to feet.
- Treat your shoes with tea tree oil or On Guard Blend essential oil.

Preventative measures:

To avoid this infection by wearing socks in communal areas, changing socks when they get wet, and avoid walking in wet shoes.



Neuroma

Sounds serious!?! A neuroma is tumor-like but not an actual tumor. It's a growth consisting of nerve tissue, creating a ball-like structure. Symptoms include the feeling as if you're walking on a pebble, which is relieved by taking off the shoe and massaging. It also presents with burning, tingling, and numbness, usually between the 3rd and 4th toes. The symptoms can extend into the toes. Tight shoes that compress the metatarsal heads together can exacerbate symptoms. Non-surgical treatment can eliminate symptoms.



Here are some natural ways to reduce symptoms:

- Wear shoes with a wide-toe box. Narrow shoes compress metatarsals, which can aggravate the nerve.
- Metatarsal pads. Metatarsal pads create splaying of the metatarsals, which creates less pressure on the neuroma and reduces pain.
- Custom orthotics. Malalignment may be the cause of neuromas. Custom orthotics will realign the foot and can incorporate metatarsal pads and neuroma plugs. Over-the-counter arch supports with metatarsal pads are another option.
- Essential oils: Copaiba, wintergreen, deep blue, Frankincense.
- Epsom salt and warm water soaks to help reduce inflammation.
- Strengthen feet with yoga, toe and heel raise exercises, and barefoot walking in safe areas.

- Earthing: Placing your feet in direct contact with the earth or use an indoor earthing pad. Earthing is a natural way to decrease pain and inflammation.

*Avoid wearing narrow shoes.

Plantar warts

I advocate for walking barefoot to strengthen those feet; however, some dangers are lurking that we can't see with the naked eye. A virus called Verruca Vulgaris can invade the skin and give us plantar warts. Plantar warts occur on the bottom of the foot and can be quite painful. Not to mention, they can spread, and you can spread them to others!

Walking barefoot in public places such as locker rooms, pool decks, gyms, and studios can expose us to this virus. Here are a few ways to identify them. Their identifying characteristics are loss of natural skin lines; they are painful when compressed and often have small visible black dots.



Here are some natural solutions:

- File down with an emery board.
- Apply oregano essential oil. Oregano is a hot oil and can be caustic to the skin. I recommend applying a drop to a Q-Tip and then to the wart once a day until resolved.

To avoid plantar warts, wear socks or sandals when tempted to go barefoot in public places. Grip socks are a perfect barrier and add anti-skid protection in exercise classes.

*Always consult your Podiatrist if any signs of infection should arise or if warts persist.

Ingrown Toenails

Oh, my aching toe! When the skin adjacent to the nail gets painful, red, and swollen, you may have an ingrown toenail. An infection often accompanies ingrown toenails, so it's imperative NOT to ignore symptoms. Note that if there is pus present, you have an infection and should see a Podiatrist.



If symptoms start, here are some natural measures you can take:

- Epsom salt soaks with warm water. After soaking, use a wooden nail stick and loosen any dirt present in the nail fold or under the nail plate.
- Essential oils: one drop of tea tree can be applied daily using a cotton ball.
- Keep the area clean. Covering with a Band-Aid or bandage is best when in shoes to avoid bacteria and fungus contamination.

*Avoid tight shoes or shoes that are narrow in the toe box. Your shoes may be a contributing factor.

*Avoid cutting nails down the sides. Cut straight across and around corners with a file. Keeping nails short is helpful.

*Ingrown nails usually need to be surgically removed, so if symptoms persist, see your Podiatrist.

Metatarsalgia

Metatarsalgia is a term used for pain and inflammation in the ball of the foot. There may be some visible swelling on the bottom (plantar) aspect of the foot as well. Usually, there is no redness or other signs of infection. It may be the result of high impact activities such as running and jumping. It can also occur from retrograde pressure caused by hammertoes.



Ways to reduce symptoms naturally:

- Metatarsal pads: make sure you read instructions for proper placement. The pad's leading edge should be just below (in the direction of the heel) the metatarsal heads, not under them. If this increases symptoms, remove it immediately.
- Essential oils: Deep Blue Rub and oil, Copaiba.
- Custom orthotics or over-the-counter arch supports: alignment can be a factor in causing symptoms in the ball of the foot. A metatarsal pad can be placed within the device, making it easier to place without slippage.
- Epsom salt warm water soaks to help reduce inflammation.

- Earthing: place your feet in direct contact with the earth or use an indoor earthing pad. Earthing is a natural way to decrease pain and inflammation.
- Strengthening the foot reduces the overall risk of injury. Toe and heel raise exercise, yoga, and barefoot walking in safe areas are ways to increase foot power.

If conditions persist, visit your Podiatrist to rule out more severe conditions that can cause stress fractures or plantar plate tears and neuroma.

*Avoid narrow shoes and shoes without arch support.

A note about Essential Oils

Essential oils are aromatic compounds that come from plants. They protect plants from bacteria, viruses, fungi, and insects. Essential oils have been used medicinally since ancient times and are making a resurgence for those seeking natural and safe options to support their body's well-being. Applying them to the bottom of the feet is the best place for absorption.

Please note they are not a substitute for acute or urgent care.

Essential oils can be used aromatically, topically, and some can be taken internally.

Choose certified pure therapeutic grade oils to ensure quality and safety.

Download a free eBook [Essential Oils for Beginners](#) to learn more.

To purchase, please visit [my Doterra page](#).

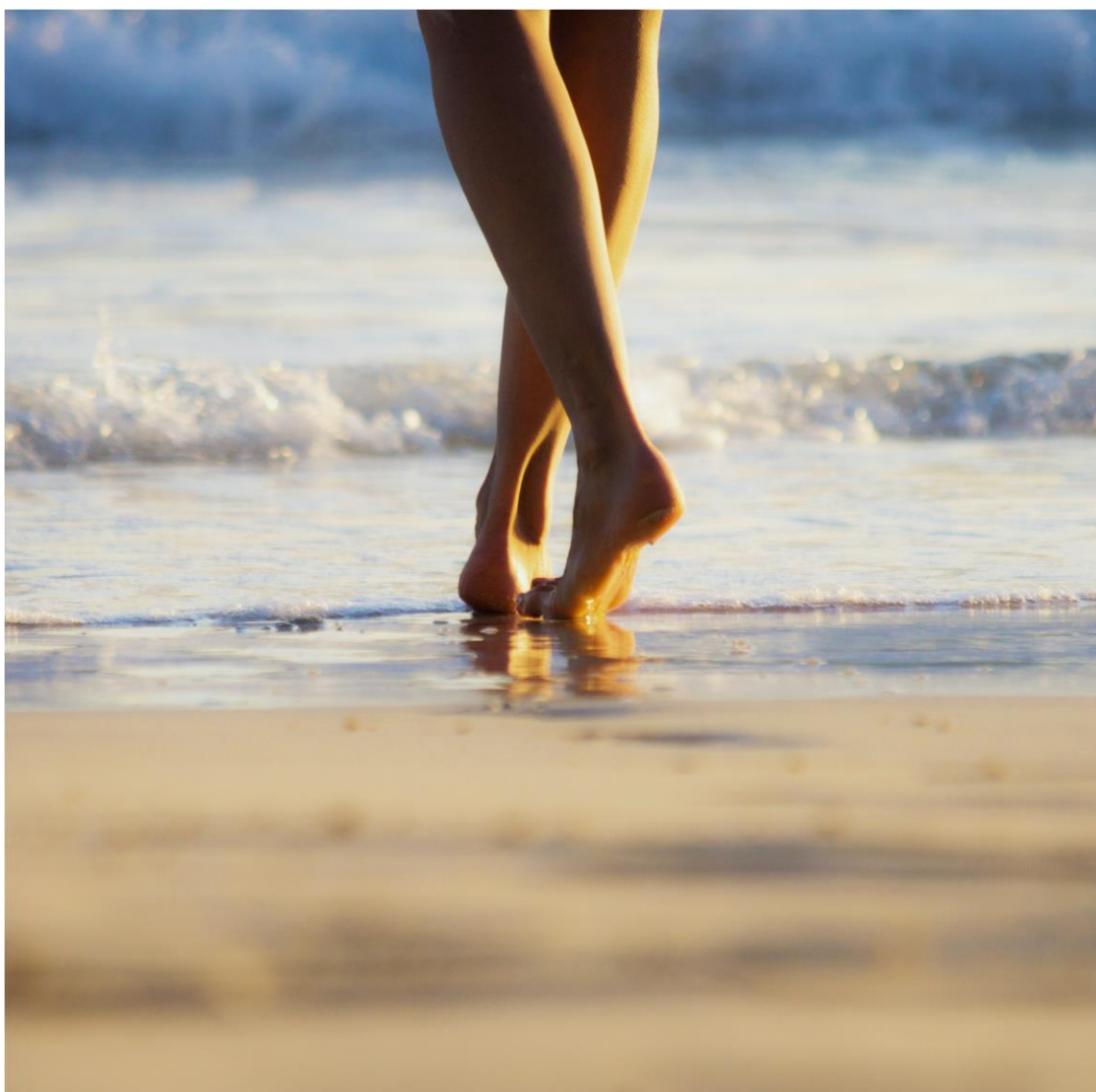


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A note about Earthing

Earthing is a natural way to receive the Earth's natural electrical charge. Studies have shown the physical benefits of being in direct contact with the Earth's surface. The most beneficial is anti-inflammatory. Earthing can also be achieved with [Earthing products](#).

For more information and to purchase, visit [Earthing](#).



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