

# FIX YOUR FEET FOR SANDAL SEASON

Get ready to have your toes on show with our expert footcare tips



**WALK WELL**  
Carla Ehaus, from the merrell Hiking Club (merrell.com), says you should choose new-season footwear with the following things in mind:

**A GOOD FIT**  
Sneakers or shoes should keep your foot in place, preventing from them sliding around and chafing, spralling of the heel.

**ADJUSTABLE**  
Ideally, summer walking shoes should have the ability to be slightly adjusted to allow for any swelling to your feet get hot.

**RIGID SOLE**  
The sole of your shoe should not be too soft, giving you stability over uneven ground. If you find this uncomfortable, look for a shoe with a cushioned midsole to make some firm.

**W**hen was the last time you look a proper look at your feet? Chances are they've been tucked away in socks and shoes over winter – hard skin forming, nails discoloring and ankles swelling. So, give your feet some TLC now to make sure they're happy and healthy when it's time to slip into summer footwear.

**STEPS TO TAKE**  
→ Promote polish and trim.  
→ If no fungus is present, wash and dry feet before filing and buffing nails.  
→ Use water-based nail polish – it's less likely to dehydrate the nails.



temperature can mess with circulation and trigger chilblains, explains Dr Delecton Lee Deorforon (covul). Chilblains usually clear up in a few weeks, but to speed up recovery, avoid sudden temperature changes and keep feet warm and dry.

**STEPS TO TAKE**  
→ Avoid smoking, as this can block the skin and cause infection.  
→ Use over-the-counter chilblain cream to ease itching.  
→ Quit smoking – this restricts blood flow and can make chilblains worse.

**Chilblains**  
These are small, itchy, and redness on your toes caused by restricted blood flow, often as a result of tight, damp footwear. A rapid change in

**Unightly nails**  
Cracked or discoloured nails are common after winter. If you're concerned about the nails being infected, for a professional take a look, says Marion Yau, a podiatrist at footcliniclan.cn.co.uk. 'A treatment of topical medication containing urea and antifungal prepoc her are usually all that's needed.'

**Swollen ankles**  
Tighter footwear can leave feet and ankles puffy. 'Elevating your legs when possible can help reduce bloating and puffing,' says Marion. If you have been wearing compression stockings, wear them as directed. 'Ensure you're drinking enough water, or dehydration can lead to water retention.'

**STEPS TO TAKE**  
→ Raise your ankles when sitting, particularly at the evenings. It helps blood and fluid drain away from your lower legs and feet.  
→ Massage feet and ankles twice daily to stimulate lymphatic drainage.  
→ Limit your caffeine and alcohol intake.

**Blisters**  
Never pop or try to drain a blister, as this can lead to infection. This is a blister chosen to protect it and clear it to heal naturally, says Marion. This can take a few days. 'To help prevent them, avoid wearing new shoes in summer when feet are more prone to swelling and friction.'

**STEPS TO TAKE**  
→ Clean and cover with a blister plaster.  
→ If wearing new shoes, use blister protect on wear prone to rubbing.  
→ Wear cotton socks and change them help.

**Hard or cracked skin**  
'Dry heels, due to hot shoes and boots, can cause deep cracks in the skin which can become painful to walk and, in some cases, become infected,' says podiatrist Dina Geibl. 'If the skin becomes too thick or feels painful, even after using a heel care routine, make an appointment to see a podiatrist.'

**STEPS TO TAKE**  
→ Daily, gently file down any hard skin using a pumice stone or a callus tin.  
→ Follow by moisturising feet using a urea-based cream, such as Flexital Cracked Heel balm (£6.99 for 56g. Boots).  
→ When you apply moisturiser at night, sleep in socks.



**Pain**  
Soft, stiff or wrunged five winter footwear may have left you with grovne fesoitk – pain in the arch of your feet. Popular winter shoes, like wellies and floccelined boots, offer little to no support, effort



To ease the plantar fascia – the thick band of tissue on the bottom of your feet – to overstretch, says Dr Lee. Practice foot and calf-stretching exercises every evening for a week before changing your footwear.  
**STEPS TO TAKE**  
→ Roll a tennis ball on the floor with the arch of your foot to massage it.  
→ Take breaks when you have to stand for long periods.  
→ Choose summer footwear that has with support and cushioning.



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