

Foot Sense

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Jan 2017

15 Hacks for Avoiding Winter Foot Problems

In the winter many of us love to be in the mountains snowshoeing, skiing, or snowboarding, while the rest of us would rather be indoors reading a good book in front of a roaring fire. Either way you could be faced with winter foot problems that you'd rather avoid. Here are 15 hacks to help prevent or alleviate these problems.

Dry or Cracked Heels

Cracked and dry heels have many causes but dry, winter air is definitely one of them. Now I know that we have plenty of moisture in Seattle during the winter, but if you keep a wood burning stove going, use baseboard heat, or one of those portable heaters you can dry out the air to such an extent that your feet can become dry and cracked.

- Use a moisturizer such as [Gold Bond Ultimate Softening Foot Cream with Shea Butter](#), [Curel Foot Therapy](#), or [Aveda Foot Relief](#). Use as often as needed but be sure to apply before bedtime and cover with socks if you can. For more severe cracking consider a cream with urea such as [Udderly Smooth Extra Care Cream](#).
- Gel socks - during the day you use gel socks for 20 mins to soothe and heal your feet
- Vaseline with socks at bedtime (turn over)

Seattle Black Bean Soup

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1/4 pound chopped turkey or ground beef (or leave out if vegetarian or vegan)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 (1 pound) sweet potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 large red bell pepper, diced
- 2 (14.5 ounce) cans diced tomatoes
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper (or add more for taste)
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 2 (16 ounce) cans black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1/4 teaspoon salt



1. Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat, and cook the ground turkey or beef about 2 to 3 minutes. Place the onion in the pot with cayenne and cook until tender. Stir in garlic and mix in the sweet potatoes, bell pepper, tomatoes with juice, and water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer 15 minutes, until sweet potatoes are tender.
2. Stir the beans into the pot and cook uncovered until heated through. Mix in the cilantro and season with salt.

Fractures

Winter sports enthusiasts will certainly put themselves at greater risk for ankle, foot and toe fractures. The rest of us can easily slip on slick sidewalks and stairways. Seattle winter 2016 is supposed to be snowier and icier than usual. Some hacks to help keep the fractures away are:

- Keep your body physically fit for your favorite outdoor sport. Your body needs to be able to handle the twists and turns that are inevitable for skiers and snowboarders.
- Wear the right footgear for the season and make sure they fit properly. Also, wear low heels and shoes that will give you some traction.
- Use handrails or other assistance to get down stairs safely.

Raynaud's Syndrome

Do your toes and fingers turn bluish-white when they're exposed to the cold? Then you very likely have Raynaud's Syndrome. This syndrome is not dangerous but it is uncomfortable. The color changes as a result of small spasms in the blood vessels which reduce the blood flow to your extremities. Some hacks to help Raynaud's Syndrome are:

- Reduce or stop smoking
- Check with your physicians about your medications
- Warm socks that wick away moisture (moisture can make your feet colder)

Blisters

Dry feet and friction cause blisters. Participating winter sports will make blisters more likely. Here are some simple hacks to prevent them.

- Wear shoes that fit (heels are common places for blisters and a heel that doesn't stay in place in a shoe can be a blister maker).
- Wear socks that wick away moisture (sweat can also cause blisters).
- Use a piece of surgical tape on the areas of your feet that tend to blister.

Heel Pain

Heel pain is very common in people with flat feet. And in the winter we may be less active which can tighten up our calf muscles. As soon as we hit the slopes or do some snowshoeing we're pulling on those tight calves which in turn can activate our heel pain.

- Make sure you get yourself in shape before you go to Stevens Pass and that includes doing proper stretches to get your calves loosened up. Tight calves are one of the key factors in plantar fasciitis.
- Weight gain can cause your arches to fall. Check your shoe size so you can make sure you are wearing shoes or ski boots that fit. The flatter your feet the more likely you'll get heel pain.
- Go see a [Seattle podiatrist](#) to get your feet checked. Shoe inserts or orthotics can correct your faulty foot mechanics.

If you're suffering from any of these conditions, call us today at 206-368-7000 for an appointment. Often same day for emergencies and less than 2 weeks for chronic foot pain. You can also [request an appointment online](#).