



# FOOT SENSE

A monthly newsletter from your podiatrist



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## How to Prevent and Treat Toenail Problems When Hiking

Toenail damage, black toenails, and toenail loss are common problems in hikers. While often seen as a badge of honor by hardcore trekkers, toenail damage can lead to ingrown toenails and longer term problems such as dystrophic or misshapen toenails and fungal toenails.



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## Causes of Toenail Problems in Hikers

- **Wearing boots that don't fit properly** – wearing boots that are too short or allow your feet to slide forward can cause your toes to hit the top of your boots when you hike. Toenails get damaged from the repeated pressure. The nail can lift off the nailbed causing a blood blister to form under the nail. Fungus can also get in where it can cause a nasty fungal toenail infection.
- **Letting your toenails get too long** – when your toenails are too long, pressure from the top of the boot can damage them.
- **Flattening of the arch** – if your feet aren't properly supported than your arch can flatten causing increased volume in your boots. Essentially your feet become too long for your boots causing your toes to hit the top.

### Quick Tape for Plantar Fasciitis Pain

\$10





Visiting family and friends on the East Coast



Spending lot's of time getting my boat ready to sail

## Lemony Chicken Arugula Quinoa Salad

By Feasting At Home

### Ingredients

8 ounces baked Chicken breast ( or one can chickpeas, drained)

2 extra large handfuls baby arugula

1 1/2 – 2 cups cooked quinoa

1 avocado, sliced

1–2 scallions, sliced

Optional: Scallions, oranges, sunflower sprouts, hemp seeds, any nut or seed

### Creamy Basil Dressing

-1/2 cup basil (packed down tight, about 1 ounce)

-2 fat garlic cloves

-Zest from one medium lemon

-2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice, more to taste

-1/3 cup olive oil

-1/2 teaspoon salt, more to taste

-1/4 teaspoon cracked pepper

-1/8– 1/4 plain yogurt or vegan mayo



### Directions

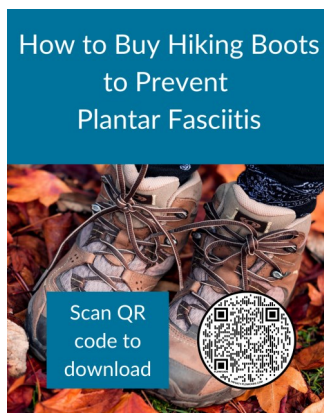
1. Make the Basil Dressing: Place basil, garlic and lemon zest and a food processor and pulse until finely chopped. Pour in olive oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper and pulse to combine (don't make it too smooth). Place in a bowl or jar and whisk in some sour cream if you want it creamy ( adjusting salt as needed). This will keep 4 days in the fridge.
2. Assemble salad. (You can keep all components separate if packing to take to work)
3. Toss arugula with quinoa and scallions and some dressing to lightly coat. Divide among two bowls. Add chicken and avocado and any nuts or seeds that you like. Spoon a little more dressing over the chicken and season the avocado with salt and pepper.

- **Improper boot lacing** – when boots aren't laced properly your feet are more likely to slide forward, particularly when you hike downhill. This can be particularly problematic for hikers with narrow heels.
- **Socks that are too thick** – wearing socks that are too thick will also increase the volume in your boots, allowing your toes to hit the top.

## How to Prevent Your Toenails from Hitting the Top of Your Boots

The key to preventing toenail damage is to prevent your toenails from hitting the top of your boots. Here's how:

**Buy the right boots** – it all starts with ensuring you have boots that fit properly for the type of hiking you do. I've written an entire eBook on this subject called, "[How to Buy Hiking Boots to Prevent Plantar Fasciitis](#)" or scan QR code to download. While the book covers plantar fasciitis the information is still relevant for preventing toenail damage.



**Use proper lacing techniques** – you can keep your feet from sliding forward by using specific lacing techniques. The following techniques can be a tremendous help:

- Use the extra eyelet in your trail shoes – at the top of your trail shoes you should see two eyelets right next to each other. Use those two eyelets (on both sides) to create a loop over the top. Take the lace from the opposite side and pull through the loop. This will help tighten your feet back into your boots.

Use a surgeon's knot -- on heavier duty boots use a surgeon's knot. Start by pulling all the slack out of the bottom of your boot. When you get to the top two hooks instead of simply placing them in the hooks, take your laces and wrap them around each other twice before cinching. [For a better idea of how this works, view this video.](#)

- Cut your toenails regularly – it's essential to cut your toenails properly before you hike. Always cut them straight across but not too short.
- Change out the boot insert or wear custom orthotics – everyone can benefit from an [over-the-counter insert](#) when hiking. They'll help keep your feet stable and your arches from flattening out. If you have flat feet or a tendency to develop heel pain or Achilles tendonitis, you'll likely need [custom orthotics](#).
- Buying socks – when you buy your boots be sure to buy your socks at the same time. That way you'll avoid getting socks that are too thick.

## What To Do If Your Toenail Is Black Or Has Fallen Off

If you have a blackened toenail or your nail has fallen off [here are things you can do when on the trail and once you get home.](#)

If your toenail remains discolored or becomes white, you may have also developed toenail fungus. The only way to confirm its fungus is to get your toenails tested by your podiatrist.

Learn about how we treat fungal toenails, by scanning the QR code below.



## Tips for Hiking with Kids

A good hike is one that appeals to a child's sense of exploration and adventure. Every trail has some kind of adventure in it.

Look for discoveries along the way. Bring a magnifying glass and kid-friendly field guide or [hiking journal](#).

Teach kids to be good observers by looking for signs of wildlife (feathers on the ground, claw scratches on tree trunks, animal tracks, bird holes in dead trees, fur along the trail, slugs., water striders on lakes, sand dollars along the beach, and frogs in pond).

Choose a trail with features that interest kids as destinations or turnaround spots. Remember a child's sense of time. Have patience when they stop to ask questions. They may be seeing their first trillium or woodpecker.

Put yourself in their boots. Their legs are short and it takes three of their steps for every one of yours. Let the kids set the pace.

Call for rest stops before they ask for them and praise them for how well they are doing.

Source: Washington Trails Association



### ***From the Desk of Dr. Rion Berg***

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