



# FOOT SENSE

A monthly newsletter from your podiatrist



Dr. Rion Berg

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## How to Make a Pain-Free Switch to Fall Footwear

Along with fall comes cooler Seattle weather. You've probably already traded sandals for closed-toe shoes, and with our inevitable rain, you've likely been eyeing your boots. But if you're dealing with bunions, hammer-toes, or other foot conditions, this seasonal transition can bring unexpected discomfort. The good news? With the right approach, you can keep your feet both dry and pain-free this fall.



### Why Fall Footwear Can Hurt

After months of freedom in open-toe shoes, your feet may rebel against confinement. It's not just your imagination—there are real reasons why fall can be tough on feet.

Bunions, those bony bumps at the base of your big toe, can become significantly more irritated when squeezed into narrow shoes or boots. The pressure from tight shoes pushes and rubs against the bunion, causing inflammation, redness, and pain that can make every step uncomfortable.

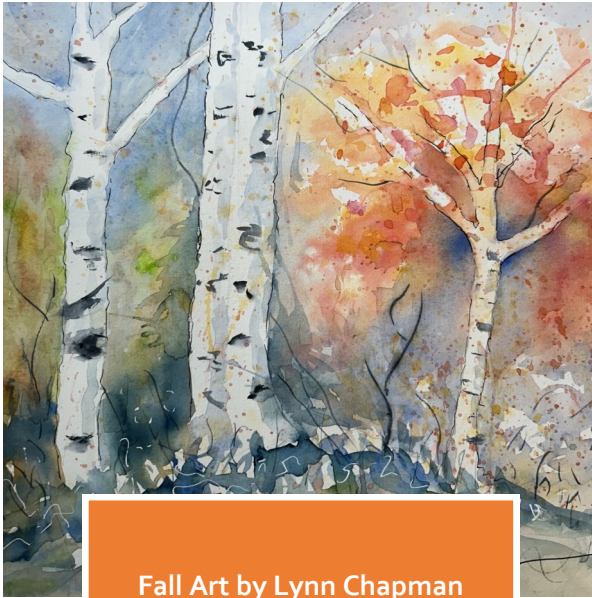
Hammertoes, where toes bend downward at the middle joint, often rub painfully against the top of the shoe. In sandals, these bent toes have room to exist without friction. But closed shoes create constant contact points that can lead to corns, calluses, and painful raw spots.

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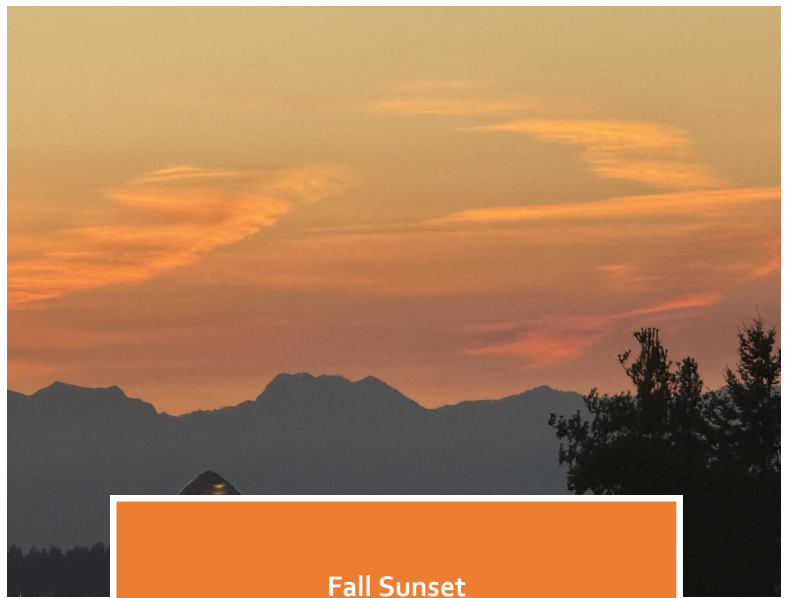
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Fall Art by Lynn Chapman



Fall Sunset

### Pumpkin Lentil & Sweet Potato Soup (Vegan)

October wouldn't be complete without a pumpkin based recipe. Hope you enjoy it!

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 white onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 large sweet potato, peeled and diced (about 2 cups)
- 1 large carrot, sliced
- 1 tablespoon mild curry powder
- 4 cups vegetable broth or water
- 1 cup red or brown lentils, rinsed
- 1 (15 oz) can light coconut milk
- 1 (15 oz) can pumpkin puree
- 1 teaspoon salt (or to taste)
- Black pepper to taste
- Fresh cilantro
- Greek or non-dairy yogurt



#### Instructions:

1. **Prepare and cook the vegetables:** Chop the vegetables into bite size pieces. Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add onion, garlic, sweet potato, and carrot. Sauté for 5-7 minutes until onion is softened.
2. **Add everything else:** Stir in curry powder and cook for 30 seconds. Then add broth, lentils, coconut milk, and pumpkin puree. Season with salt and pepper.
3. **Boil then simmer:** Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer for 30-35 minutes until lentils and sweet potatoes are tender. Add extra water or broth if soup gets too thick.
4. **Serve:** Taste and adjust seasonings. Serve hot with fresh cilantro, Greek or non-dairy yogurt, and pita

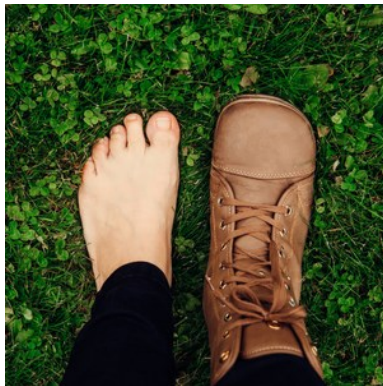
Other common foot pain culprits include Morton's neuroma (nerve pain in the ball of your foot), plantar fasciitis, and even arthritis—all of which can worsen when feet are compressed in poorly-fitting footwear.

Ingrown, black, and fungal toenails can also occur if you wear shoes that are too short or ones that have too much room and allow your feet to slide forward and jam your toes into the top of your shoes.

### Finding Shoes That Actually Fit and Keep You Dry

You don't have to choose between dry feet and comfortable feet. Today's waterproof footwear comes in styles designed with foot health in mind. When shopping for fall and winter shoes, prioritize these features:

Wide toe boxes are essential. Your toes should have room to spread naturally without touching the sides or top of the shoe. This is especially critical for bunions and hammertoes, and important to help keep Morton's neuroma pain at bay. If the toe box is tapered or pointed, keep looking.



Proper length matters more than you think. You need at least a thumb's width between your longest toe and the shoe's end. Your feet swell throughout the day and during activity, so that extra space prevents jamming and rubbing and will help prevent toenail problems.

Low heels (under 1 inch) minimize pressure on the forefoot to prevent bunions and neuromas from developing. Because high heels force your weight forward, they can also aggravate these conditions if you already have them.

Adjustable closures like laces, straps, and buckles allow you to customize the fit, particularly if your feet swell or you need to accommodate an existing bunion or hammertoe.

Adequate arch support and cushioning reduce strain on your plantar fascia and help distribute pressure more evenly across your foot. Avoid flat shoes as these can flare-up this condition.

Orthotic-ready shoes are essential if you're dealing with an existing foot condition that requires these devices to align your feet.

### The Pitfalls of Rain Boots

As you know, boots can come in a variety of styles, materials, and waterproofness. While your typical rubber boot may be great at keeping your feet dry, most are terrible when it comes to foot support. If you're wearing them for your daily commute or standing in them for hours you're likely setting yourself up for foot pain.



In addition, rubber boots don't breathe, leaving your feet sweaty and more prone to developing Athlete's foot or toenail fungus. Fortunately, there are many great boots out there that are designed to support and keep your feet dry simultaneously. Just follow the same recommendations I made for shoes for your boot purchases.

### When to Seek Help

Don't ignore persistent pain. If your feet hurt after changing to fall footwear, if bunions, hammertoes and neuromas are limiting your shoe choices, or if you're avoiding activities because of foot discomfort, come see us.

We can provide custom orthotics, recommend specific footwear brands, provide metatarsal pads, or discuss other treatment options that can make closed-toe shoes comfortable again. Seattle's wet weather means you'll be wearing these shoes for months—there's no reason to suffer through them.



## Local Business Spotlight: Discover Hex Enduction Records & Books in Lake City

Right here in Lake City, you'll find a neighborhood treasure that's bringing culture and community to our corner of Seattle. Hex Enduction Records & Books opened in November 2019, founded by friends Dean Whitmore and Tom Ojendyk (records) along with Gabi Page-Fort (books). Our marketing director, Lynn Chapman, has stopped in several times and always comes away with a great book find and the memory of an engaging conversation with the owners.

Named after The Fall's iconic album, this independent shop carefully curates quality used records and books without chasing trends, creating a thoughtfully highbrow yet welcoming atmosphere.

What makes Hex Enduction special is its focus on community connection. Located between the Back Door dive bar and Emerald City Tattoos, it's become part of Lake City's cultural heart. The owners see customers as fellow fans rather than just shoppers, creating a space where curious minds can share discoveries and genuine human interaction.

Despite opening just months before the pandemic, Hex Enduction has thrived by offering something the internet can't replicate: the uplifting experience of connecting with passionate people over art and music.

Stop by and experience what makes this neighborhood gem vital to our Lake City community.

Visit: [hexenduction.com](https://hexenduction.com) | Instagram: [@hexenductionrecords](https://www.instagram.com/hexenductionrecords)

*Supporting local businesses means supporting our neighbors—and that's good medicine for our entire community.*



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—Dr. Rion Berg



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