

TRAINING / TREKKING FOOT CARE ADVICE

to minimise callouses / black toe nails / tinea / blisters / discomfort and to maximise foot comfort, while trekking / training

Select good quality / appropriate equipment or specialised anti-friction product e.g. Body Glide.

Socks – Consider individual toes e.g. "Injinji", blends of cotton/wool/micro fibres to wick moisture away from skin. DO NOT wear 2 pair – if you are considering this, get your feet problems sorted and/or buy correct sized footwear.

Skin – Apply light layer of moisturiser e.g. Vitamin E, Sorbolene etc to potential pressure areas or all skin areas of feet. (Don't use metho to "harden" your feet!)

Use anti-blister powders or cornstarch on pressure areas. (Friction source will glide over skin more easily due to changed surface tension, resulting in less damage to tissues e.g. blisters calluses).

Nails – Trim carefully at least a few days before event. Do not have long nails.

Footgear – Use comfortable, previously worn boots, cross trainers or athletic footwear depending on conditions. If uneven terrain, consider *passive* ankle support i.e. boots or *active* ankle support e.g. MBT, Joya. (Make sure you have used these when training).

Shoes should be (1) anatomically lasted so toes sit separately to each other especially for more than 7km walking, (2) 4mm or no heel height (Zero Drop) so weight is not thrown forward onto balls of feet, toes or toe nails. If current sport shoes are 8—12mm heel height, your calves, hamstrings will need time to adjust, but your toes and balls of feet will thank you for it.

For all day walking / trekking, you can cool down hot feet by removing shoes and socks at lunchtime. Put on fresh socks if possible. Avoid trouble by dealing with "hot spots" when they occur. (Literally. An area on your foot that gets hot and/or sore).

Remove shoes and socks and either:

- ◆ Cool down hot feet with cold water/cloth.
- ◆ Tape pre-blistered areas (e.g. "Fixomull" or similar)
- ◆ Dress blisters – products such as Spenco's 2nd Skin. Wipe clean with alcohol swab first. Prick blister with sterile needle and drain fluid.
- ◆ Unload biomechanically overloaded foot segments. (e.g. centre of ball of foot, big toe joint) with deflective / load redistributing padding.
- ◆ Protect sore toes / chafed inter-digital surfaces with foam toe sleeves OR 5 toed socks.

Note: A 2 minute Shiatsu massage (pressure point) of feet at this stage, or days end, is great for relieving flagging spirits. (Also backs, when carrying heavy loads).

What footwear can you change close to the event? Socks, shoes to only a slight change if over-protective e.g. motion control, 10mm heel height – uncomfortable orthotics to dynamic ones, non-rigid type foot strengthening family. Shorten stride length if necessary.

Blister dressings Gold standard is Spenco's 2nd Skin or similar – hydrogel circles. Apply with 2 layers Fixomull tape. Leave intact over 48 hours if possible.

Note: Be careful when removing any dressing / padding / tape from an area that's blistering. You may inadvertently pull layers of skin off with tape and make worse!

Consider – Compression tights / garments – "Skins" type, to reduce muscle soreness, aid recovery, reduce friction, the effects of altitude and more.

Remember – Dressing product for ordinary wounds e.g. Melolin will not relieve the pain/soreness of blistered feet. Use foot/blister specific products for greatest relief.

ABOVE ALL – ENJOY THE SCENERY AND THE EXPERIENCE!