

WH FILM STUDIOS  
PRESENTS:



# EXCLUSIVE FOOTAGE

THE FOLLOWING FEATURE  
HAS BEEN RATED F  
FOR FEET. IT CONTAINS  
GRAPHIC IMAGES AND  
SHOCKING SECRETS ABOUT  
YOUR HEALTH, YOUR  
WORKOUTS, YOUR LIFE.

PICTURE START >

If feet were the subject of a major motion picture, it would be genre-defying. Equal parts action (as the basis of your entire kinetic chain, they connect every single bone in your body), suspense (what horrors can you catch from a communal shower "oor?), sci-fi (the latest techie pedi tools are, like, whoa), and drama (heels—a love/hate story). So with all those riveting plot devices, why do we predict lackluster ticket sales?

Well, for one, feet consistently rank as one of the most overlooked body parts. Research shows that—in

terms of our overall well-being—we place them lower than our hearts, eyes, teeth, skin, and diet. Even doctors foster that neglect. Think back to your last physical. Did your GP even ask you to take your socks off?

Still, 77 percent of us admit to having issues with our lowest extremities. And when your feet hurt, *everything* hurts. That's because, unlike any other part, these two are a microcosm of your entire body—revealing vitamin deficiencies, skin conditions, and a whole host of diseases, from a sluggish thyroid to diabetes.

Women have a particularly fraught relationship with their pair. We experience four times as many foot problems as men (from bunions to pinched nerves), but our issues run deeper than any specific ailment. We worry about their scent, size, shape, even how to dress them. Yes, heels. They're a cultural touchstone for how far we've come: Mattel just reconstructed Barbie's feet so the iconic doll could wear "ats, and some have speculated Julia Roberts went barefoot to Cannes to protest how women were turned away for not wearing

heels the previous year. But they also indicate how far we still need to go: Our female superheroes fight crime in six-inch wedges. Don't even get us started on all the sprained ankles that could cause.

Whether you view heels as a symbol of oppression or liberation, whether you're a size 7 or 11, whether you're a marathoner or a casual exerciser, there are so many things your feet want to tell you. You've just got to know what to look for and listen to. So sit back, kick off your shoes, and enjoy the show.



◉ NOW SCREENING: HEALTH

# CITIZEN PAIN

Forget Rosebud: What's that crud on the shower floor?! Whatever does that tingling feeling mean? Podiatrists Emily Splichal, D.P.M., author of *Barefoot Strong*, and Jacqueline M. Sutera, D.P.M., solve your biggest foot-health mysteries.

**Q** I know I can catch athlete's foot from the gym shower. Any other souvenirs?

**A** Actually, you can get athlete's foot from the locker room carpet and the stalls. Plantar warts—grainy growths on the soles of feet—are the top shower threat. The virus, which is a strain of HPV (not the kind that can cause cervical cancer), can live on the damp surface of the floor. But only certain people's immune systems are genetically vulnerable, says Splichal. Plantar warts are stubborn AF, so if they don't go away on their own, a podiatrist can laser them off. Always wear shower shoes, clean them with soap and water after each use, then let them air-dry at home.

(“Don't keep them inside your gym bag or they can get moldy and nasty,” says Sutera, who recommends replacing your shower shoes once a year.) For even more insurance, thoroughly dry your feet post-shower and apply tea tree oil, a natural antifungal and antibacterial agent.

**Q** Sometimes my feet go numb and/or tingle. I'm healthy and fit—should I be worried?

**A** Those symptoms are common in people with diabetes but could signal less serious issues in healthy folks. If you notice the numbness only when you take your shoes off, your kicks might just be too tight, which can compress the nerves on the top

of the feet. The other culprit could be your diet. Gluten allergies or inflammatory foods like refined carbs and sugars can fire up your peripheral nerves and bring on the tingles. Or you just might be lacking in certain B vitamins. Your primary care physician can run blood work to see if you're deficient. (Many women following vegetarian diets are.) Splichal recommends taking 1,000 micrograms of L-methyl folate three times a day. This is an active form of B complex, crucial since many women don't have the enzyme to absorb unactivated vitamins. If you're one of them, you could be peeing it out. Waste!

**Q** Help, my feet seem to be getting bigger!

**A** Join the club, woman. The tendons and ligaments that support your foot start to loosen in your thirties, and your arch begins to fall. Those two shifts make your foot longer and wider. It's a subtle growth expansion, though, so your shoes may just need to be stretched out (a cobbler can do

this for about \$10). Pregnancy can also cause your feet to go up a half or full size—and, in some cases, stay that way postpartum, thanks to the appropriately named hormone relaxin, which makes the ligaments in your body spread and lengthen. Not much you can do about it since your body needs that hormone to birth a babe!

**Q** The smell! What's behind it, and how can I remedy it, stat?

**A** The noxious scent comes when sweat mixes with bacteria on your feet. After your daily wash, sprinkle on a foot powder to absorb excess moisture, leaving bacteria little to feast on. Or, if you've got time, brew some black tea and, once it cools, do a 10-minute foot soak every day for a week, which will shrink the sweat glands. If your feet sweat excessively (a.k.a. hyperhidrosis, meaning you're

perspiring through socks), ask your podiatrist for a prescription foot antiperspirant. Botox injections can also help, if you can stand it. “They require literally 100 injections per foot, which is not fun,” says Splichal. It can cost up to \$1,000 and isn't covered by insurance, but it will keep you dry for three to six months.

**Q** I am in my late thirties and can't bear being in heels for more than 30 minutes. But my 50-year-old friend lives in hers. What?

**A** The cushiony fat pads in our soles tend to thin out as we age, making heels unbearable. But “if you wear them regularly, in some cases your body can adapt by replacing those fat pads with thick calluses that can withstand the height,” explains Sutera. Likely what happened to your bud.

**Q** How do I treat bunions?

**Don't tell me to stop wearing heels for life.**

**A** Those bony bumps jutting from your big-toe joint are a bitch, and largely genetic. You want to slow their progression by wearing shoes with a roomy toe box. Also, many people with bunions tend to overpronate—the foot rolls inward in motion. Curb that tendency with foot drills that up flexibility in your calves: Press the ball of your bare foot down into the ground while contracting the arch—but without curling your toes. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat five times per foot. Splichal also recommends using a Bunion Bootie (\$34, bunionbootie.com)—a thin sock-like device that helps improve ligament flexibility—once a week or after wearing heels. And keep your weight stable. Added pounds aggravate those suckers.

## HORROR SHOW!

Getting a pedicure shouldn't result in boils up your legs (unfortunately, it's happened). Use these tips to stay safe.

**> Appointment times:** Don't book if you have an open cut, or within six hours of shaving, waxing, or depilating, says Donna Perillo Karlin, founder of Sweet Lily Natural Nail Spa in NYC. This opens hair follicles, which can make you more susceptible to infections and folliculitis.

**> Tools:** Bring your own. If not, check for proper sterilization. (Sitting in a vat of alcohol or UV sterilizer—looking at you, mysterious microwave—is not effective.) “Reusable tools should be put in an autoclave,” says Susan Nam, owner of Polished Beauty Bar in NYC. “Ask to see the self-sealing sterilization pouch [that holds the tools], and check that its indicator box has changed color”—as it does post-autoclave. Files should be tossed after each client; be sure your technician grabs a fresh one.

**> Basins:** Look for free-standing basins that are not connected to an internal water stream and are cleaned with bleach or a hospital-grade disinfectant. (Straight-up ask what the salon uses—if they break out the Windex, run!) More salons with whirlpool basins are using tub liners, but that won't protect you from contaminated pipes.

**> Nail shaping:** Cutting too much nail along the sides can cause skin there to fold over the nail, which can lead to a painful ingrown. Instead, ask your tech to clip your toenails straight across. Prefer a round shape? Round off the tips but keep edges square.

## > > BEHIND THE SCENES: REFLEXOLOGY

Don't call it a foot massage. It works to ease tension, reduce pain, and boost circulation throughout your entire body. Using your thumb, firmly press these areas to relieve...

**Stress and back pain:** Along the arch of the foot    **Headaches:** “Inchworm” your way up each toe  
**Bloating:** Bottom center sole    **Sinus pressure:** Toe pads

Source: Reflexologist Gabrielle Zale at Perry Street Reflexology in NYC

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### MOBILITY 101

Sounds like we're talking to a gal named Blanche, but mobility moves keep feet strong at any age. Add these to your routine twice a week.

#### > To improve ankle stability: Stretch Your Calves

Stand with your hands against a wall and your legs staggered. Bend your front knee, straighten your back leg, and shift your weight onto your back foot. Hold for 30 seconds, then repeat on the other side.

#### > To ease inflammation: Foam-Roll Your Calves

Place a foam roller under your ankles, and sit with your hands flat on the floor for support. Lift your pelvis and roll your body forward until the roller reaches the back of your knees. Roll back and forth for two minutes.

#### > To increase range of motion: Move Your Feet

Trace small circles or the alphabet with your toes, one foot at a time, for at least two minutes.



▶ NOW SCREENING: FITNESS

# RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARCH

Harrison Ford can't save you from these foot injuries. But Jordan Metzl, M.D., can. "Your feet are the foundation of virtually all athletic movement, which is why they're so easy to hurt," says Metzl, sports medicine physician and author of *Dr. Jordan Metzl's Running Strong*. "Neglecting pain can lead to serious issues up your entire kinetic chain." We count down the top five workout-induced villains.

CHRIS STRALEY



### THE ARCHETYPE: ACHILLES TENDINITIS

**CHARACTER TRAITS:** Inflammation of the Achilles tendon (it runs from calf muscle to heel), which causes a sharp pain and, if left untreated, can lead to the tendon tearing

**SCENE OF THE CRIME:** Repetitive strain from high-impact exercise, overpronation, or not warming up before intense workouts

**YOUR SCRIPT:** Opt for 30 to 60 minutes of low-impact exercise like swimming or biking, but only if that feels good. Ice the area for 15 minutes four to six times a day. Strengthening the muscles with calf raises can reduce the load on the tendon, allowing it to heal faster. Oh, and you shouldn't be walking differently (or limping). If you are, call your doc. You could need a boot or rehab.



### THE ARCHETYPE: PLANTAR FASCIITIS

**CHARACTER TRAITS:** Dull, then sharp stabbing pains in the middle to bottom of your heel, often worse in the a.m.

**SCENE OF THE CRIME:** Exercises that put continuous stress on your heel—like long-distance running or hiking, or ballet—can cause the connective tissue around the Achilles tendon to stretch, tear, and grow inflamed.

**YOUR SCRIPT:** Resist any activity that worsens the pain. To loosen the fascia, roll a tennis ball under each foot a few minutes a day. If symptoms don't improve after two weeks, your M.D. might prescribe a nighttime foot splint to help stretch the tight tissue. Still no relief? You might need a corticosteroid injection. A bad case can take around 10 months to heal.



### THE ARCHETYPE: ANKLE SPRAIN

**CHARACTER TRAITS:** A general term for an overstretched (mild), partially torn (moderate), or ruptured (severe) ligament on either side of your ankle; these ligaments help stabilize the joint.

**SCENE OF THE CRIME:** Odds are you rolled your foot when you stepped onto an uneven surface. How pedestrian of you!

**YOUR SCRIPT:** Can you walk without cringing? You can pop ibuprofen to help quell inflammation, and elevate and ice your ankle for 15 minutes at a time to reduce swelling. As the pain fades (a week or so, if mild), stretch to regain range of motion: Point your foot up and down (as many reps as you can sans pain). See swelling? See a doc. You may need crutches, rehab, or surgery.



### THE ARCHETYPE: BUSTED SKIN

**CHARACTER TRAITS:** Corns and calluses that thicken, or blisters that bubble, to protect skin from rubbing down to the point of infection

**SCENE OF THE CRIME:** Too-tight running shoes, which create too much friction or place too much pressure on the same area of skin repeatedly

**YOUR SCRIPT:** Let blisters heal on their own; picking not only hurts but can also expose the area to infection. The rare exception: The spot prevents you from using your toes. In that case, a derm can pop it with a sterilized needle, then cover it with antibiotic ointment and a bandage. For corns, buy a salicylic acid patch from the pharmacy. The acid will penetrate and help melt off skin's tough layers. For calluses, turn the page.



### THE ARCHETYPE: STRESS FRACTURE

**CHARACTER TRAITS:** A small crack in a bone in your foot that develops over time and causes concentrated pain that worsens if ignored

**SCENE OF THE CRIME:** Doing too much high-impact activity, too soon or too often

**YOUR SCRIPT:** The earlier you get a diagnosis, the better—a stress fracture can sideline you for 10 months if you don't adjust your routine early on. Nix running and jumping sports for at least a month (longer if it's severe). Chat with your M.D. to figure out what caused the break—overtraining? poor running form? low bone density?—then address it (scale back workouts, visit a running specialty store for an analysis, add more vitamin D and calcium to your diet, respectively).



### R.I.P., TOENAIL

Losing one (or many) is a fact of life for marathoners. *WH* associate fitness editor Marissa Gainsburg honors her loss.

"Somewhere between training for three half-marathons in six months, the nail on my second right toe started to thicken, then lift upward. I knew it was barely hanging on: It made a sad clicky sound when filed. Four months later, mid-chaturanga in yoga class, I felt the toenail pop off. No pain, just a gentle "plucking" feeling. I tucked the nail next to my mat (gross, I know) and tossed it afterward. All that's left is a nub the thickness of spaghetti. I grieved, then celebrated my sacrifice. I'm a real runner now."

▶ NOW SCREENING: BEAUTY

# PRETTY BABIES

Ooh, child. Those calluses, that fungus, them flakes. We matched pedi problems with critically acclaimed beauty products.\*



## PEDEGG ULTIMATE FOOT FILE

*"ODDLY SATISFYING... FULL OF SURPRISES."*

### TARGET AUDIENCE: THOSE WITH NOTICEABLY RAISED CALLUSES

With 135 stainless steel microfiles, this egg-shaped tool levels calluses and traps shavings in a built-in box. "It's the only at-home tool I like for removing the outer layer of raised calluses," says Marlene Reid, D.P.M., a podiatrist in Naperville, Illinois. Caveat: It lacks the precision to target calluses that blend into normal tissue. "It's hard not to hit thin skin, causing pain or irritation." And used too vigorously or too frequently, "it can stimulate more callus to grow to protect against such friction," says Lori Weisenfeld, D.P.M., a sports podiatrist in NYC. Use a light touch, and file twice a month, tops. Skip it if you have diabetes or circulatory issues; instead, a podiatrist can remove your calluses with a fine scalpel.

**ROLL THE CREDITS!** \$10, walgreens.com



## AMOPÉ PEDI PERFECT WET & DRY RECHARGEABLE FOOT FILE

*"CHILLS! IT GETS UNDER YOUR SKIN."*

### TARGET AUDIENCE: ANYONE WITH FLAKY, SCRATCHY HEEL SKIN—BUT NO RAGING CALLUSES

This Dremel-esque device gives an electrifying performance, winning raves from critics. "My wife was dying for one when all the beauty editors put it on Instagram," says Joshua Zeichner, M.D., a dermatologist in NYC. "After she used this, her feet were as smooth as I've ever seen them." It works more gradually than the callus-grating PedEgg, delivering "a controlled and polish-like removal rather than a true shaving," says Reid. Use it for a few minutes daily, or do a longer sanding session once or twice a month. It kicks up some serious dust, so be sure to work over a towel or in a (dry) tub.

**ROLL THE CREDITS!** \$70, amazon.com

### BLUE PERIOD

*It's the shade of the season.*

### Vivid Indigo

*OPI True Neons Nail Lacquer in Correctamundo, \$10, ulta.com*

### Nearly Noir

*Deborah Lippmann Gel Lab Pro Nail Polish in After Midnight, \$20, deborahlippmann.com*



## BABY FOOT EXFOLIANT FOOT PEEL

*"SPECTACULAR VISUAL EFFECTS! COULDN'T LOOK AWAY!"*

### TARGET AUDIENCE: NONSENSITIVES WHO NEED A FOOT MAKEOVER

More drama than a *Lifetime* movie! Submerge feet in the gel-lined booties for one hour, wash them, then wait for the plot to unfold. About five days in, the skin on your soles will peel like an onion. With a low pH and a power dose of alpha hydroxy acids bolstered by penetration-enhancing alcohol, "the gel breaks apart the connections between skin cells to

speed superficial shedding," says Zeichner. Because dead skin on the soles tends to accumulate in patches, it releases in substantial sheets, explains cosmetic chemist Ginger King. Not ideal for runners or hikers who already have blisters, as the molting can aggravate them.

Since this is a major chemical exfoliation, be extra generous with sunscreen on your gleaming new toots.

**ROLL THE CREDITS!** \$25, babyfoot.com



## ILUMINAGE SKIN REJUVENATING SOCKS

*"HAS MOMENTS OF SHEER BRILLIANCE"*

### TARGET AUDIENCE: ANYONE BATTLING FOOT FUNGUS OR STANK

Vampire flicks, postapocalyptic tales, copper-threaded socks—some things call for a suspension of disbelief. Or so we thought. These low-cut black socks—which transmit copper ions into the skin—are more sci than fi. "Copper is the only metal recognized to help prevent pathogens," says Dendy Engelman, M.D., a dermatologist in NYC.

"This antimicrobial property protects feet from fungus and bacteria to keep them healthy and odor-free." Unexpected benefit: Research has shown that copper can stimulate the production of collagen and other key proteins for smoother skin, Engelman adds—so prepare for really supple soles. That softening can help volumize thinning fat pads in the feet, making heels feel comfier.

**ROLL THE CREDITS!** \$35, iluminagebeauty.com

## PUMICE PSA!

Rock star or funk master? Daily use can soften calluses (better than a foot scrub) so you don't need mega-treatments. But these stones "can grow bacteria and transfer them to skin, causing infections," says Whitney Bowe, M.D., a dermatologist in NYC.

Clean your stone after each use with a firm-bristled brush and antibacterial soap, says NYC manicurist and salon owner Jin Soon Choi. Then store it in a dry place (i.e., not your puddle of a soap dish). Once a week, soak it in an equal parts bleach-water solution. Replace it every eight to 12 months.

### ROLL THE CREDITS!

*JinSoon Nail Polish in Dandy, \$18, jinsoon.com; Alexis Gamblin heels, \$530, alexisgamblin.com*



MITCH MANDEL

# PITCH PERFECT

Heels. Expert after expert claims they're the worst thing we could do to our feet. To which we reply: "But Mom!!!!" A compromise? High-rise shoes that work with—not against—your foot shape.



## HIGH ARCH

Your sole naturally follows a heel's angle, but at the expense of the ball of your foot, which supports all your weight. A stacked, platform style (like this open toe) redistributes the burden to your heel. Jessica Simpson, \$110, [jessicasimpson.com](http://jessicasimpson.com)



## FLAT FEET

Our condolences: Your feet are the least heel-friendly. Keep the pitch (that's the diff between the height of the heel and sole) low. These Mary Janes have an insole that molds to your feet as you wear it. Marion Parke, \$625, [marionparke.com](http://marionparke.com)



## TOE ISSUES

Got bunions or hammertoes? Stiff fabrics rub your digits raw. Go for malleable suede, or try a d'Orsay (the cutouts offer extra room). This striking cobalt pair ticks off both boxes. Dune London, \$126, [nordstrom.com](http://nordstrom.com)



## NARROW FEET

Slim feet tend to be more narrow at the heel too, so an ankle strap keeps you secure. The round toe provides coverage should you need a nonslip insole. Jimmy Choo, \$750, [jimmychoo.com](http://jimmychoo.com)



## WIDE FEET

A cage style with adjustable laces stretches to suit your set—crucial, as most feet tend to swell as the day goes on. Let those puppies breathe! Nine West, \$99, [ninewest.com](http://ninewest.com)

## >> BONUS FEATURE!



## A FLAT WITH CUSH

Just 'cause there's no heel doesn't mean it's good for you. But this flat is comfy *and* cool: a memory-foam footbed, adjustable straps, airy perforation. Ashley Cole Collection, \$350, [ashleycolecollection.com](http://ashleycolecollection.com)

## INNER BEAUTIES

A.k.a. insoles, pads, and liners

> **Red Carpet Paris insoles** (\$30, [redcarpet-paris.com](http://redcarpet-paris.com)). Italian leather. Orthopedic cushions at the heel and the ball. Open-toe cuts too!

> **Foot Petals pads** (\$19, [footpetals.com](http://footpetals.com)). Unlike plastic pads, these gel-based ones cushion the balls of feet without making them sweat.

> **Dr. Scholl's Dream Walk liners** (\$9, at drugstores). Stick to each shoe's back edge to protect ankles from cuts and blisters.



MITCHELL MANDL (SHOES); CAMILLA AND MARC DRESS; ON MODEL: ALEXANDRE BURBAN BLUE CAGE SHOES (ON FLOOR)

## ROLL THE CREDITS!

Alexis Gamblin heels, \$550, [alexisgamblin.com](http://alexisgamblin.com)

## THE SHOE-SHANK REDEMPTION

The shank is the most uncomfortable part of a stiletto. So with the help of NASA scientists, Dolly Singh redesigned it.

**Q** What was the genesis of your brand, Thesis Couture?

**A** When I joined [Elon Musk's aerospace company] SpaceX, I had just turned 30, and by the time I left, I was over 35. And your body changes as you get older, right? So the frustration I had at the end of each day kept increasing. I was the director of recruiting, so that meant spending a lot of time walking people around, and I was supposed to be welcoming. When your feet hurt, it's harder to do that.

**Q** You worked with NASA astronauts, orthopedic surgeons, and mechanical designers. What makes the heels more comfortable?

**A** In a standard pair of four-inch heels, our architecture reduces loading on the ball of the foot from 80 percent down to 50 percent. That load adjustment is a big part of what makes our design better. The materials we chose are also arched in a way to support the foot more naturally. ■

**Q** What was step one in making comfier stilettos a reality?

**A** In 2011, a cobbler and I

ripped apart a pair of heels. Inside is a metal plate called a shank, and you're like, "This is kind of stupid. I'm standing on [something] that looks a knife."

## >> WANT A PAIR?

The shoes retail for \$925, but there's already a wait list of 11,000 people. (Read: *Hamilton*—level hard to get.) Register on [thesiscouture.com](http://thesiscouture.com) to be placed on the "Notify Me" list.

