

# TURN BACK THE CLOCK on foot problems in 2017!



Jonathon Cain of Journey and Dr. John Sigle.

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Not too long ago, many of us thought that turning 60 meant retiring from a career, starting a hobby, babysitting the grand kids, and winding down during the golden years of life. Times are a lot different now and baby boomers are redefining this stage of life. It's common to see our older celebrities like William Shatner and Samuel Jackson in info commercials. Hollywood stars like Bruce Willis and Harrison Ford are resuming old action

hero roles; and Classic Rock legends like Journey, Santana, and Chicago are still touring the globe. A whole wave of people in their 60s, 70s and beyond are certainly not ready to trade in their active and more youthful roles for walkers and wheelchairs.

According to a recent article in *Investment News*, "Retirees just want to have fun." By no means are retirees winding down. They are living longer, working longer, and far more active than former retirement generations. While having a sound financial plan is critical for retirement, it

is even more critical to ensure that your health and feet are in good condition to foster an independent and quality lifestyle.

Unfortunately, as we get older so do our feet. In fact, foot problems are often the first signs of aging. Ligaments, tendons, and muscles become weaker and thinner and less able to hold the joints in proper alignment. Joint cartilage wears down as bones move out of alignment resulting in toes that are no longer straight or parallel to one another; and feet become lumpy and bumpy. Arches tend to flatten and collapse. The skin loses its ability to produce sweat and oil resulting in peeling, flaking, itchiness, discoloration, thickening, hardness, and cracks. Toenails become thicker, dryer, and discolored because of decreased blood flow to the toes, trauma, and nail fungus. Toes and feet become more crooked, and the shape, length and width changes.

I know this all sounds gloomy, but here are simple ways to age-proof your feet. Here are some helpful tips to turn back the clock on foot problems:

- Be a little more proactive and inspect your feet regularly. Look for a change of color, temperature, nail discoloration, cuts or cracks in the skin, scaling, peeling, or any new growths.
- Practice good hygiene. Wash and dry your feet regularly; and exfoliate and moisturize dry flaky skin.
- Trim your nails properly. Trim them straight across and not too short. Avoid cutting them on the sides or corners to prevent ingrown toenails and infection.
- Wear shoes that are proper for the activity you are engaged in and replace worn out shoes.
- Wear comfortable shoes instead of fashionable ones, and do not buy shoes that feel tight. Avoid wearing high heels or at least reduce the frequency of use. Select stable shoes if you have weak ligaments and tendons.
- When buying new shoes, shop at the end of the day when your feet are at their maximum size; and measure your feet standing.
- Wear custom orthotics if you have pain in the ball or heel of your foot, or if you have weak arches.
- Avoid walking barefooted to reduce the chance of injury and infection.
- Wear proper hosiery and socks if you have changes in circulation or other vascular diseases or diabetes. Avoid wearing nylon and rayon socks.
- Consider laser treatment and new nail restoration products to get rid of toenail fungus and embarrassment.
- Exercise caution when doing self-treatment or using home remedies. Let a podiatrist treat your ingrown toenails, corns, and calluses to avoid infection and discomfort.
- Don't ignore foot pain because it's not normal; especially if you have persistent pain that is limiting your mobility and lifestyle.
- Don't be afraid to consult with your podiatrist about surgical options if you have structural deformities like bunions, hammertoes, and bone spurs, or end stage arthritis that is limiting your mobility and quality of life.

For those of you who intend to maximize your quality of life, please become more aware of your feet and care for them properly. Fortunately, new advancements in medical products, therapies, and surgical options are available to address a wide range of foot problems.

If you are seeking advanced foot and ankle surgeons to help you heal, restore, and rejuvenate your feet call the Foot & Ankle Center of Illinois at (217) 787-2700 to schedule an appointment. Clinics are located in Springfield, Taylorville, Decatur, Carlinville, Shelbyville, Sullivan, and Monticello. Visit the medical library at [myfootandanklecenter.com](http://myfootandanklecenter.com) to obtain information on foot and ankle disorders and treatments. Informational videos are available on laser and cosmetic treatments for toenail fungus and pain therapy.

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