

# Tips for Healthy Feet in 2022!



John M. Sigle, DPM, FACFAS,  
Advanced Foot and Ankle Surgeon



Grant Gonzalez, DPM, FACFAS,  
Advanced Foot and Ankle Surgeon



Christopher Collazo, DPM, AACFAS,  
Advanced Foot and Ankle Surgeon



**Submitted by**  
**Foot & Ankle Center of Illinois**

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 older adults are redefining this stage of life. 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 Dr. John Sigle, advanced foot and ankle surgeon at the Foot & Ankle Center of Illinois, "Most of our older patients who have recently retired are not winding down; they are looking forward to having fun! Unfortunately, many have difficulty achieving this because of long standing foot problems. Our goal is to properly diagnose their condition and provide treatment to end their pain and restore mobility. When

this happens, it's easier for them to move forward and maintain an independent lifestyle." "As we age, so do our feet," said Dr. Sigle. "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. Feet have a tendency to become more lumpy and bumpy

over time and arches often flatten and collapse. 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," said Dr. Sigle.

Some of the more common foot and ankle problems that

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the aged population experience includes bunions, hammertoes, tendonitis and plantar fasciitis, toenail fungus, and arthritis. According to Dr. Sigle, "Advanced diagnostics, surgical techniques and products are now available and producing wonderful outcomes. It is really important for older adults who are experiencing foot pain to seek proper medical assistance as soon as possible. Many conservative treatments and self-help treatments are also available. Here are a few tips for healthy feet in 2022!"

- 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. These conditions only worsen if left unattended.
- Be 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.
- Wear custom orthotics if you have pain in the ball of the foot or heel, or if you have weak arches. Custom orthotics will provide added support and help problems from getting worse.
- 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 for toenail fungus and pain management. Both types of laser treatments are effective, pain free, quick, and affordable.
- 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.
- People who are at risk i.e., diabetes, end-stage renal disease, end-stage arthritis, foot deformities, obesity, etc., should consult with a podiatrist on a regular basis to help prevent serious foot problems from developing.

If you are experiencing foot pain that is impairing your quality of life, contact the Foot & Ankle Center of Illinois at (217) 787-2700 to schedule an appointment, or book on-line at [myfootandanklecenter.com](http://myfootandanklecenter.com). 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. No referrals are necessary. Appointments are typically available within 24 hours.



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