

# The Dos and Don'ts for Fabulous Feet

Whether you like to get a pedicure in the nail salon or at home, follow these easy Dos and Don'ts to keep your feet looking and feeling their best.

## Dos



- ✚ If you have diabetes or poor circulation in your feet, consult a podiatrist so he or she can recommend a customized pedicure that both you and your salon can follow for optimal foot health.

- ✚ Schedule your pedicure first thing in the morning. Salon foot baths are typically cleanest earlier in the day. If you're not a morning person, make sure that the salon filters and cleans the foot bath between clients.

- ✚ Bring your own pedicure utensils to the salon. Bacteria and fungus can move easily from one person to the next if the salon doesn't use proper sterilization techniques.

When eliminating thick, dead skin build-up, also known as calluses, on the heel, ball and sides of the feet, use a pumice stone, foot file or exfoliating scrub. Soak feet in warm water for at least five minutes, then use the stone, scrub, or foot file to gently smooth calluses and other rough patches.



- ✚ When trimming nails, use a toenail clipper with a straight edge to ensure your toenail is cut straight across. Other tools like manicure scissors or fingernail clippers increase the risk of ingrown toenails because of their small, curved shape. See a podiatrist if you have a tendency to develop ingrown toenails.

- ✚ To smooth nail edges, use an emery board. File lightly in one direction without using too much pressure, being sure not to scrape the nail's surface.

- ✚ Gently run a wooden or rubber manicure stick under your nails to keep them clean. This helps remove the dirt and build-up you may or may not be able to see.

- ✚ Maintain the proper moisture balance of the skin on your feet by applying emollient-enriched moisturizer to keep soles soft.



- ✚ Use a rubber cuticle pusher or manicure stick to gently push back cuticles. If toenails are healthy, you can use nail polish to paint toenails. Make sure to remove polish regularly using non-acetone nail polish remover.

## Don'ts



- ✚ Resist the urge to shave your legs before receiving a pedicure. Freshly shaven legs or small cuts on your legs may allow bacteria to enter.
- ✚ If you are receiving a pedicure and manicure, don't use the same tools for both services as bacteria and fungus can transfer between fingers and toes.
- ✚ Although certain salons offer this technique, don't allow technicians to use a foot razor to remove dead skin. Using a razor can result in permanent damage if used incorrectly and can easily cause infection if too much skin is removed.
- ✚ Don't round the edges of your toenails. This type of shape increases the chances that painful ingrown toenails will develop.
- ✚ Emery boards are extremely porous and can trap germs that spread. Since they can't be sterilized, don't share nail files with friends and be sure to bring your own to the salon, unless you are sure that the salon replaces them with each customer.
- ✚ Don't use any sharp tools to clean under nails. Using anything sharp makes it easy to puncture the skin, leaving it vulnerable to infection.
- ✚ Be sure that you don't leave any moisture between toes. Anything left behind can promote the development of athlete's foot or a fungal infection.
- ✚ Because cuticles serve as a protective barrier against bacteria, don't ever cut them. Cutting cuticles increases the risk of infection. Also, avoid incessantly pushing back cuticles, as doing so can make them thicker.
- ✚ If you suffer from thick and discolored toenails, which could be a sign of a fungal infection, don't apply nail polish to cover up the problem. Nail polish locks out moisture and doesn't allow the nail bed to "breathe." Once you fix the underlying issue, then it is safe to paint nails. If the problem persists, be sure to visit your podiatrist.

