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# NorthPointe News



## Foot & Ankle Special



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## Holiday Heels

Holiday and New Year's celebrations are occasions where we wear our finest fashions. However, the desire to look good sometimes comes with the aches caused by high heeled shoes.

The doctors of NorthPointe Foot & Ankle have a few suggestions to share with anyone wearing high heels for special occasions:

- Minimize the amount of time in the shoes. Wear boots or other comfortable shoes on your way to the event and return to those comfortable shoes as you depart.
- Place shoe pads in the inside of the shoes for added support and comfort for the ball of your foot.
- Consider bringing "purse slippers" – or compact slippers – that are designed to fit in a small purse. Slip those on as aches begin.
- A heel height of 1¾ inch to 2½ inch is usually well tolerated.
- Consider shoes with an ankle strap or other restraint to avoid sprains.



## TOE AND METATARSAL FRACTURES

Fractures of the toe and metatarsal bones are common and require evaluation by a specialist. Your NorthPointe Foot and Ankle podiatrist should be seen for proper diagnosis and treatment, even if initial treatment has been received in an emergency room.

A fracture is a break in the bone. Fractures can be divided into two categories: traumatic fractures and stress fractures.

**Traumatic fractures** are caused by a direct blow or impact, such as seriously stubbing your toe. Traumatic fractures can be *displaced* or *non-displaced*. If the fracture is displaced, the bone is broken in such a way that it has changed in position.

Signs and symptoms of a traumatic fracture include:

- You may hear a sound at the time of the break.
- Pain at the place of impact at the time the fracture occurs and perhaps for a few hours later, but often the pain goes away after several hours.
- Crooked or abnormal appearance of the toe.
- Bruising and swelling the next day.

**Stress fractures** are tiny, hairline breaks that are usually caused by repetitive stress. Stress fractures often afflict athletes who, for example, too rapidly increase their running mileage. They can also be caused by an abnormal foot structure, deformities, or osteoporosis. Improper footwear or osteoporosis may also lead to stress fractures.

Stress fractures should not be ignored. They require proper medical attention to heal correctly.

Symptoms of stress fractures include:

- Pain with or after normal activity.
- Pain that goes away when resting and then returns when standing or during activity.
- Pain at the site of the fracture when touched.
- Swelling, but no bruising.

If a fractured toe or metatarsal bone is not treated correctly, secondary complications may develop. For example:

- A deformity in the bony architecture which may limit the ability to move the foot or cause difficulty in fitting shoes.
- Arthritis, which may be caused by a fracture in a joint, or may be a result of angular deformities that develop when a displaced fracture is severe or hasn't been properly corrected.
- Chronic pain and deformity
- Non-union, or failure to heal, can lead to subsequent surgery or chronic pain.

### Treatment

Fractures of the toe bones are almost always traumatic fractures. Treatment for traumatic fractures depends on the break itself and may include these options:

- **Rest.** Sometimes rest is all that is needed to treat a traumatic fracture of the toe.
- **Splinting.** The toe may be fitted with a splint to keep it in a fixed position.
- **Rigid or stiff-soled shoe.** Wearing a stiff-soled shoe protects the toe and helps keep it properly positioned.
- **"Buddy taping"** the fractured toe to another toe is sometimes appropriate.
- **Surgery.** If the break is badly displaced or if the joint is affected, surgery may be necessary.

Breaks in the metatarsal bones may be either stress or traumatic fractures. Treatment of metatarsal fractures may include:

- **Rest.** Sometimes rest is the only treatment needed
- **Avoid the offending activity.** It is important to avoid the activity that led to the fracture. Crutches or a wheelchair are sometimes required.
- **Immobilization, casting, or rigid shoe.** A stiff-soled shoe or other form of immobilization may be used to protect the fractured bone while it is healing.
- **Surgery.** Some traumatic fractures of the metatarsal bones require surgery, especially if the break is badly displaced.

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## Healthy Holidays

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention shares some ways to be your healthiest self over the holiday season.

### Stay active.

Being active is your secret weapon this holiday season. It can help make up for eating more than usual and has many other health benefits.

Walking is a great way to be active. Try these tips to incorporate more walking into your activities:

- Skip the search for a close-up parking spot. Park farther away and walk to your destination.
- Make a few extra laps around the mall. Walk the length of the mall before going into any stores. The mall is also a good place to walk to avoid bad weather.
- Start your work day by taking the stairs. Remember to stretch your legs and take short physical activity breaks throughout the day.
- When walking, make sure you are wearing the proper shoe for the amount of walking and for the surface you will be travelling.

If you are having trouble walking due to foot or ankle pain, make sure to visit your NorthPointe Foot & Ankle podiatrist soon. He/she can help diagnose the source of foot issues and discuss treatment options right for you.

### Eat healthy.

Healthy eating is all about balance. You can enjoy your favorite foods even if they are high in calories, saturated fat, or added sugars. The key is eating them only once in a while or in small portions and balancing them out with healthier foods.



- If you are traveling this season, take healthy snacks along, like fruit and low-fat protein. That way, you can avoid the temptation of convenience foods high in fat, sugar, and salt.
- If your favorite home recipes call for fried fish or chicken with breading, try healthier baked or grilled variations. Maybe try a recipe that uses dried beans in place of higher-fat meats.
- Resolve to make new habits. This year, while at parties and other gatherings, fill your plate with fruits and veggies first, and pick small portions of just your favorites of the other items.

### Plan activities that don't involve eating.

In addition to enjoying a meal with friends and family around the table, take the party outside!

- Try a seasonal activity with your family. Go ice skating or jump start your bucket list for the year.
- Make a "walk and talk" date with a friend or family member. Skip the Frappuccino and explore a part of your town or city that may be new to you.
- If the weather prevents you from heading outdoors, try mall-walking, or planning a family game night. Visit that museum, botanical garden, or exhibit you've been wanting to see.
- Consider what new healthy traditions you can start this year. The possibilities are endless!

## Boot Buying Tips

The podiatrists of NorthPointe Foot & Ankle have this boot selection advice to share:



- **Be sure boots are insulated and waterproof.** Even if the boot maker says the boots are waterproof, still treat the pair with a waterproofing product.
- **Select natural material,** like leather, that allows proper airflow and keep feet dry.
- **Rubber does not breathe.** Make sure that any rubber boots purchased are fully lined to help absorb foot moisture.
- **Very flat-soled boots provide little,** if any, arch support. Cushioned insoles and arch supports could be added.
- **The best traction** is received from boots with a rubber sole and deep grooves.
- **Styles with narrow toes and high heels** often cause pain and numbness. Select a lower heel or stacked style for additional support.
- **To provide warmth,** ski sock liners are a way to keep feet warmer without adding bulk. Liners are worn under regular socks. 100% cotton socks provide the worst wicking of moisture and should be avoided. 100% polyester, or wool fiber, socks will keep feet warmer and drier.
- **Above all – listen to your feet.** If a boot is not comfortable, the footwear selected is not the best.



**Happy Holidays!**  
**From Northpointe Foot & Ankle**  
**Doctors and Staff**