

Homeopathy and care of the feet

by *Tariq Khan*

An engineering miracle combining grace, durability and sensitivity – it's an apt description of the human foot. Perhaps one of the most neglected parts of the body, generally hidden from sight, the importance of feet is only fully appreciated when something goes wrong. Healthy feet, in good working order give us the joy of movement. Painful, unhealthy feet make us feel tired and irritable and take the pleasure out of life.

Foot problems have plagued the human race since time immemorial. Chiropodists (or podiatrists as they are increasingly known) give two reasons for this. First, the foot has not yet completed the evolutionary development made necessary when our ancestors straightened up from the crouched position (in which they helped themselves along with their hands). The second factor is that our feet, made for walking on yielding, uneven surfaces – grass, sand, earth – must now pound hard pavements.

The foot has two basic functions: to adapt to the surfaces on which we walk or run and absorb the shock of impact; to take the body weight from above and move it forward.

Consider the punishment the foot absorbs in a lifetime. As we move, it goes through three forward motions; heel impact; a transitional balance phase as the weight moves forward; the thrust of the toes as the sequence is repeated on the opposite foot. Walking at a comfortable 100 steps a minute pace, each heel strikes the pavement with the equivalent of a 225lb jolt 50 times a minute. As we walk an average of 115,000 miles in a lifetime, that means tens of millions of jolts for each foot. But the foot is built to withstand many kinds of stresses, so long as the health of its complex structures is maintained. The arch of the foot counteracts much of the shock of pounding it gets with each step.



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Marigold Therapy for foot problems

So important are our feet to our well-being that they need and deserve as much attention as we give to our face. Yet the reality is that most of us tend to ignore their basic needs and generally treat them with disrespect. Small wonder that countless people hide away their feet because they are ashamed of them.

With a little effort on a regular basis, self-treatment of the more common problems can restore ailing feet. Marigold Therapy is a proven way of doing this. Painless, quick-acting and without allergy reactions, it consists of topical applications – oil, tincture, mass, ointment and cream. Many chiropodists

currently use it in conjunction with chiropodial treatments.

The gentle, non-invasive action of Marigold Therapy makes it ideal for self-help. It is based on homeopathic principles, the products are prepared homeopathically and used in combination with other homeopathic medicinal plants.

Caution

Do not attempt self-treatment if you have any of the following: diabetes, circulatory problems, infection, poor eyesight, unsteady hand.

Know your limitations. If self-treatment doesn't improve your condition, see a qualified chiropodist/podiatrist.



Common Foot Problems

- **Achillo-bursitis** – inflammation of the Achilles tendon in the heel as a result of shoe friction.
- **Athlete's foot** – very common, highly infectious condition caused by a fungus which can be picked up in communal areas or by wearing other people's shoes. When between the toes, it is characterised by moist, broken skin, an unpleasant smell and itching. When on the ball of the foot, it causes the skin to peel. On the heel it creates deep painful fissures which can sometimes bleed.
- **Bunion** – seen more in women than men, there can be a hereditary tendency but wrongly-shaped or badly fitting shoes are the usual cause. Constant pressure on the big toe joint produces inflammation with consequent pain, stiffness and swelling of the soft tissues and enlargement of the joint. The usual advice is for an operation, all too often with unsatisfactory results. Despite the prescribed long rest, many people have complications, a painful scar and inflamed foot being common. There is also a long waiting list for bunion surgery. The so-called tailor's bunion appears on the side of the little toe.

- **Corns, callous and fissures** – can appear on any part of the foot as a result of constant, excessive pressure and friction. Corns can be hard (usually on top of toes), soft (between toes), neuro-vascular, vascular and seed. The most common site for callous is on the ball of the foot.
- **Fungal infection of nails** – a toe-nail (usually the big toe) may become thickened and/or discoloured due to trauma to the nail plate from shoes, allowing fungus to enter.
- **Gout** – inflammation of the big toe joint which can appear overnight due to an excess of uric acid in the body.
- **Ingrown toe-nail** – occurs when the side of the nail cuts through surrounding skin. The area becomes very sensitive to pressure and continued pressure may cause redness, swelling and eventually, infection. Removal of part or the whole of the nail and treatment of infected tissues requires professional attention. Homeopathic podiatry can speed recovery and prevent recurrence.
- **Poor nail condition** – dry, brittle or thin, soft can be due to pressure and friction accompanied by a constitutional deficiency of mineral

salts or could arise from the side effects of drugs taken for a systemic problem.

- **Verucca** – a common viral infection of the skin, veruccae (warts on the foot or hand) are a problem for more and more people who use communal areas such as swimming baths, sports and health clubs. Some stubborn veruccae do not respond well to conventional medication. Surgical treatment can be painful and often causes scarring.

Treatment guide

Marigold Therapy consisting of topical applications only has been shown to be speedier in action and more successful than oral remedies for many common foot problems. Some conditions, however, also require constitutional treatment. It is recommended that biochemic tissue salts are tried first and then homeopathy if necessary, 6c or 30c.

Remedy selection should be in accordance with the patient's symptomatology and the materia medica and prescribed in accordance with usual homeopathic practice. If self-treatment doesn't improve your condition, see a professional.

Routine foot care

- Wash feet at least once a day with mild soap and warm water,

		SKIN							
		ATHLETE'S FOOT	BLISTERS	CHILBLAINS	CORNS & CALLOSITIES	FISSURES	INJURIES	ULCERS	VERRUCA
LEADING REMEDIES Biochemic		Nat mur 6x Nat phos 6x Nat sulph 6x	Kali phos 6x Nat mur 6x	Kali phos 6x Nat mur 6x	Calc fluor 6x Calc phos 6x Kali sulph 6x Nat sulph 6x Nat mur 6x Ferr phos 6x	Calc fluor 6x Silica 6x	Ferr phos 6x Calc sulph 6x Kali mur 6x	Silica 6x Calc sulph 6x Calc fluor 6x	Nat mur 6x Kali mur 6x Ferr phos 6x Silica 6x
LEADING REMEDIES Homeopathic		Silica Baryta carb Nitric acid Sulphur Mercurius	Arnica Cantharis Hamamelis	Nitric acid Pulsatilla Petroleum	Ant crud Arnica Picric acid	Ant crud Petroleum Sulphur	Apis mel Ledum Staphysagria Hypericum Calendula Tagetes (Marigold) Bellis Arnica	Silica Kali bic Arsenicum alb Mercurius Sulphur	Thuja occ Nitric acid Ant crud Sepia Causticum

using soft brush for nails. Dry gently and thoroughly, especially between toes.

- As a preventative treatment against some common foot problems, apply all over feet and between toes Khan's Tagetes (Marigold) Tincture and Oil, first a few drops of tincture and then a few drops of oil massaged in for one minute. If skin is dry use oil only.
- Three times a week give feet a salt bath (1 tablespoon of salt to a bowl of warm water) to relieve aching, tired feet and stiffness and improve circulation.
- Keep toe-nails clean. When trimming, don't cut too short. If toes are normal, cut nails straight across. If any toes are deformed, cut to shape of toe.
- Don't use razor blades or other sharp objects, or medicated corn pads.
- Don't put cotton wool between toes. It will harden and increase pressure or irritation.
- Go barefoot whenever possible while indoors but not elsewhere.
- Don't wear shoes without hosiery.

Daily foot exercises

- On getting up stand on tiptoe five times.
- Place a strong rubber band over the two big toes and gently pull toes apart ten times.

Guidance on footwear

Shoes need to accommodate the shape of the foot and its function as it helps the body to move. Badly fitting or wrong shaped shoes can cause painful foot problems.

Buy shoes, preferably when you have been on your feet for some time, to suit the shape and structure of *your* feet – not fashion. This is especially important for working shoes worn for long periods. Most people have a larger foot. Fit to allow this and allow 13mm space between the tip of the shoe and your longest toe. The foot is squarish in shape – not pointed. Pointed toe shoes don't give feet enough room. Square, high toe-boxes are best for your feet. Your new shoes should bend easily at the ball of the foot and the heel should fit snugly. Buy leather. It adapts to the shape of the foot, absorbs moisture and vaporises this into the air. Without this, feet get hot and perspire profusely. Athlete's foot fungus thrives in dark, damp, warm places.

High heels (over 39mm) are not good for the feet. They thrust too much body weight forward, often into very narrow-

toed shoes. Foot problems which may have been dormant, such as hammer-toes, bunions, corns and callouses, are aggravated by wearing high heels regularly. Prolonged wearing can also lead to muscle imbalance in the lower limbs which in turn can cause lower back problems.

Rotate the shoes you wear. Never wear the same pair two days in a row. It takes 24 hours for your shoes to dry out – and back into shape – after wearing. Keep shoes repaired. Worn-down heels upset foot balance.

Wear appropriate shoes for specific activities, for example when walking or standing a great deal, it is essential to have well-fitted, supportive shoes with either a lace up or adjustable bar or fastening.

Trainers are comfortable but shouldn't be worn routinely. Check socks, stockings and tights for proper fit. They shouldn't be too tight. Change daily. Whenever possible wear cotton or wool.

The Marigold Trust is a registered charity for homeopathic podiatric medicine. For further information tel: 020 8367 7434.



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BONES & JOINTS

NAILS

ACHILLO-BURSITIS	BUNION	GOUT OF BIG TOE	SPRAINS & STRAINS	PAINFUL HEELS	BRUISED BONES	BRITTLE	FUNGAL	INGROWN	THICKENED	ULCERATED
Ferr phos 6x Kali mur 6x Mag phos 6x	Ferr phos 6x Kali mur 6x Silica 6x Calc fluor 6x	Nat phos 6x Nat sulph 6x	Ferr phos 6x Mag phos 6x Kali mur 6x	Kali phos 6x Ferr phos 6x Calc fluor 6x	Ferr phos 6x Calc sulph 6x Kali mur 6x	Calc fluor 6x Kali sulph 6x	Calc phos 6x Kali sulph 6x Silica	Ferr phos 6x Kali mur 6x Calc fluor 6x Kali sulph 6x Silica 6x	Calc fluor 6x Calc phos 6x	Ferr phos 6x Kali mur 6x Silica 6x
Apis mel Rhus tox	Arnica Rhododendron Rhus tox Ruta	Benzoic acid Bryonia alba Colchicum	Rhus tox Arnica Bellis	Hypericum Rhus tox Ledum	Arnica Hypericum Ruta Symphytum	Silica Thuja Graphites	Silica Thuja Ant crud	Hypericum Ruta Silica Lachesis Causticum Sulphur	Ant crud Graphites	Graphites Belladonna Silica Myristica seb