



# BEST FOOT forward

Story | ANGELA AMBROSE

It's the time of the year when you're racing around town shopping and running errands—with little time to rest and way too much time on your feet. Buying properly fitting shoes and practicing good foot hygiene can help keep your feet healthy and pain-free.

"When there's pain, it's a sign that something's wrong. It doesn't mean, you should pop four ibuprofen and keep going," says Dr. Angela Dagley, a prominent local podiatrist. "Our feet aren't supposed to hurt, and if they're hurting, there's an issue."

When foot pain occurs, people often compensate by changing the way they walk, which can put a strain on muscle groups in the connecting joints. This pain can transfer to your knees, back and

hips, warns Dagley.

The first step is finding a shoe that fits properly. If your shoes are too tight, they might cause painful blisters, calluses or corns. When shoes are too big, your feet could slide around, often jamming your toes and causing blisters. To get the best fit, closed toed shoes should have about  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch length between the end of the longest toe and the end of the shoe.

The second step is as simple as propping feet up. You've probably scheduled your stops for the day and with all the holiday traffic, you have just enough time to get home and get ready for the evening's events—but propping up your feet at a 45 degree angle for as few as 10 minutes reduces pressure and swelling. So, pencil in a couple of rest stops for your

tootsies while you're at it.

At the end of the day when all of the action is over, there are several things you can do to alleviate foot pain starting with a soak. Some experts recommend running water over your feet while alternating between cold and hot for one minute at a time. Give your whole body a break and add a couple of tablespoons of Epsom salt to your bath to relieve muscle and joint pain. If your favorite person sitting opposite the sofa is feeling generous, maybe you can squeeze in a foot rub—and if not, try rolling a golf ball around under your bare foot.

Good foot hygiene and choosing the right shoes will help keep your feet looking and feeling healthy. "If I'm going to

be walking all day long, I'm going to be in my supportive tennis shoes," says Dagley. "I don't care if it's not cute. I'm going to be in a shoe that's going to give my foot, and all my lower extremities, that extra support."

The next time you go power shopping, consider slipping on your comfy sneakers and save your 5-inch stilettos for the galas. Your feet will thank you. ♣

## DID YOU KNOW?

Epsom salt is not just a relaxing element to add to your bath. It actually draws toxins out of your body. According to the Epsom Salt Council, adding it to your foot soak can decrease swelling, soothe dry skin and even reduce foot odor.