



## FEBRUARY 2014 NEWSLETTER



# Give Feet a Special Treat this VALENTINE'S DAY

If you are still seeking a heartfelt Valentine's Day gift idea for the loved one in your life, consider a relaxing, stress relieving foot massage. And if you are especially creative, you may consider foregoing a professional spa session and instead trying it in the comfort of your own home.

**Here are some quick tips from SheKnows.com to point you in the right direction:**

### STROKING THE TOP OF THE FOOT

Stroking stimulates circulation while warming the foot. While holding your partner's foot in your hands, use your thumbs to make a long, slow stroking motion starting at the tips of the toes and ending at the ankle. Then retrace your motion back up the foot with a lighter stroke. Continue this for two to four times.

### ROTATING THE ANKLES

This step will loosen joints and relax the feet. Place one hand under your partner's heel, behind the ankle, to brace the foot and leg. Then take hold of the ball of the foot with your other hand and turn the foot slowly in each direction from two to four times.

### PULLING AND SQUEEZING OF TOES

Toes can be very sensitive to touch, and when massaged properly the result can be very calming. Hold your loved one's foot beneath the arch, then use your other hand to slowly and firmly pull the big toe. Next, take the toe and gently squeeze and roll it between your thumb and index finger, working from base to the tip and back. Repeat these two movements for all remaining toes.

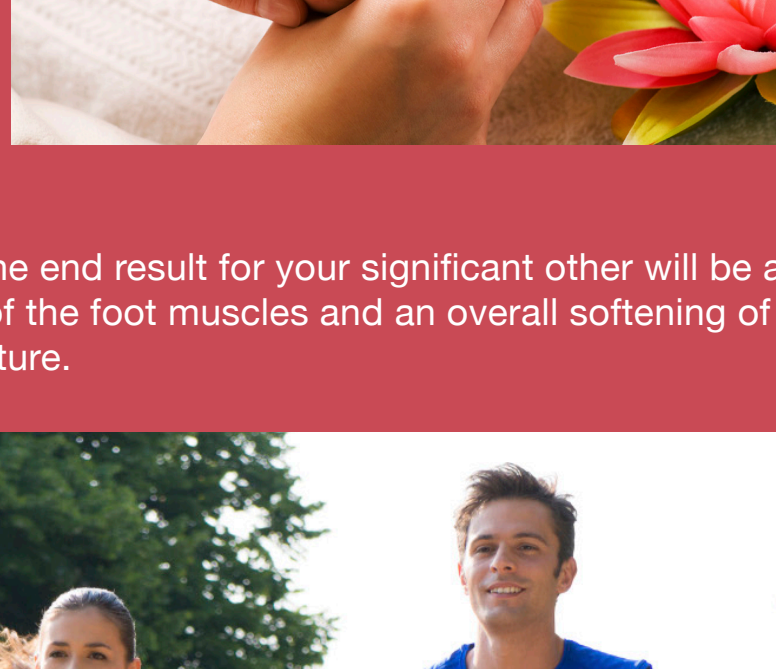
### SLIDING THE TOES

For an additional soothing effect, grasp the foot behind the ankle, cupping the heel. Then use your index finger of the other hand to slide between each toe two to four times each.

### PRESSING THE ARCH

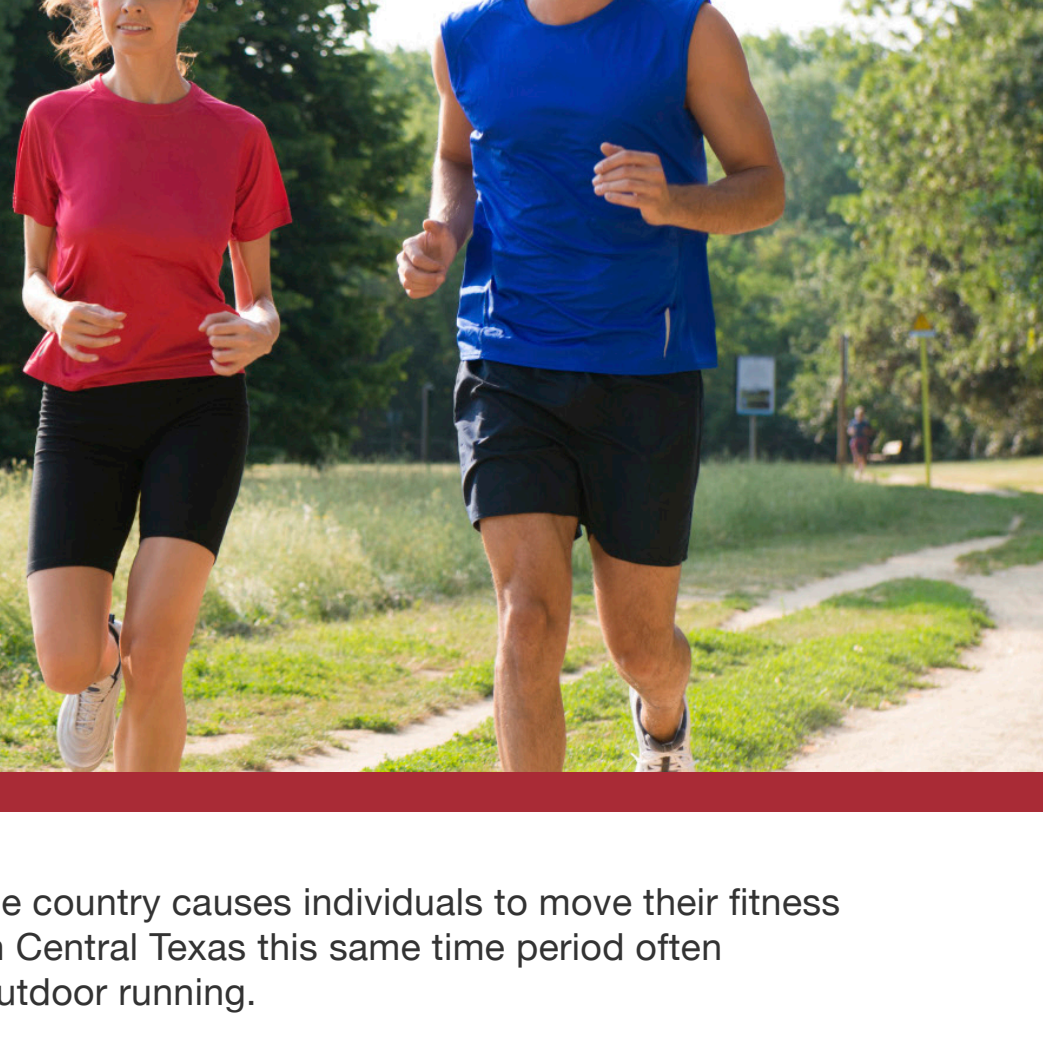
To wrap up the massage, hold the foot behind the ankle again, and then use the heel of your other hand to exert pressure on the arch while sliding from the ball of the foot toward the heel and back again.

Repeat these steps as often as desirable, and the end result for your significant other will be a boost in circulation and blood flow, a soothing of the foot muscles and an overall softening of the feet...all from a very hands-on romantic gesture.



## Getting Ready for

# RUNNING SEASON!



While prohibitive weather in many parts of the country causes individuals to move their fitness routines indoors during the winter months, in Central Texas this same time period often presents the most favorable conditions for outdoor running.

Whether you are preparing to tackle a marathon, half-marathon, 10K or 5K event, or if your New Year's resolution is simply to begin running as part of your workout routine, here are a few tips from the American Podiatric Medical Association to help you prevent foot and ankle injuries along the way.

1

It all begins with proper equipment, namely your running shoe. Brand name is not as important as a shoe that matches your type of foot and your foot's function.

It is well worth a visit to a shoe store with trained personnel that will assess your gait and help pick the shoe that is most appropriate for you in the correct size for maximum comfort.

2

Socks seem so simple, but they can be the difference between a good running experience and a forgettable one. Socks should not be 100 percent cotton.

Instead pick out poly-cotton blend that will pull moisture from the skin. Also, be careful to select socks that match your shoe size, and that offer the proper height so that you can avoid blisters on the heel.

3

The importance of stretching out and warming up cannot be overstated. Take 5-10 minutes before a run and stretch out your lower leg muscles. Then begin your run at a slower than normal pace to let your body warm up and prevent muscle strain. If you experience any pain, stop immediately and see if walking resolves the discomfort. If not, it may be time to visit your podiatrist and see if there is a condition that is limiting your running potential.

4

The post-run cool down is a key element of avoiding injury. Take an extra 10 minutes to walk and stretch before heading home. This will aid in reducing muscle soreness immediately after or in the days ahead.

If you'd like to receive a personal foot assessment before the running season begins, or if you experience pain that does not resolve itself after a few days, contact the podiatry team at Austin Foot and Ankle Specialists.

## QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Q.

***I am an avid runner, and have tied my shoes using the same granny knot that I learned as a child. Are there other options that will help prevent untying even if a double knot is used?***

A.

One of the biggest differences in shoe tying success is the use of a reef knot instead of a granny knot. All shoe tying begins with a knot and finishes with a bow. If you tie the bows in the same direction as the starting knot, that is a granny knot and you will end up with a final product that won't stay in place. To keep your laces nice and snug, use a reef knot, where you tie the starting knot in one direction and the finishing bow in the other. The bows will sit nice and even on either side of the shoe instead of crooked bows that result from granny knots.

For your free guide on shoe tying techniques from the Austin Foot and Ankle Specialists, please call our staff.

## Preventing Falls Among OLDER ADULTS



While inclement winter weather can certainly be a key factor in causing falls among active adults, the chances of suffering a misstep and ending up in the hospital can be just as great inside your own home.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, each year one in every three adults ages 65 or older falls and approximately two million are treated in emergency rooms for fall-related injuries. Unfortunately, the risk of falling increases with each decade of life. The long-term consequences of fall injuries, such as hip fractures and traumatic brain injuries, can impact the health and independence of older adults.

Thankfully, falls are not an inevitable part of aging. In fact, many falls can be prevented. Everyone can take actions to protect the older adults they care about, such as encouraging them to:

### GET SOME EXERCISE

Lack of exercise can lead to weak legs and this increases the chances of falling. Any form of exercise can increase strength and improve balance, making falls much less likely.

### BE MINDFUL OF MEDICATIONS

Some medicines can have side effects such as dizziness or drowsiness, which make falling more likely. Having a doctor or pharmacist review all medications can help reduce the chance of risky side effects and drug interactions.

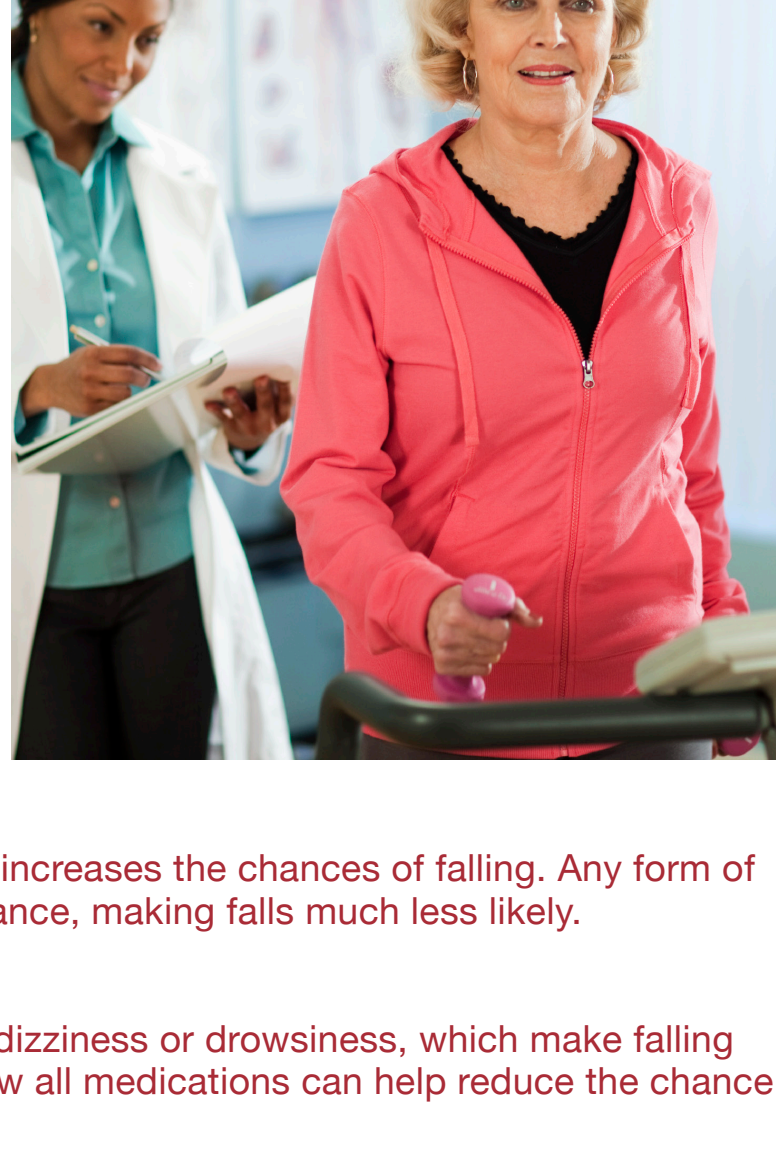
### KEEP THEIR VISION SHARP

Poor vision can make it harder to get around safely. Older adults should have their eyes checked every year and wear glasses or contact lenses with the right prescription strength to ensure clear vision.

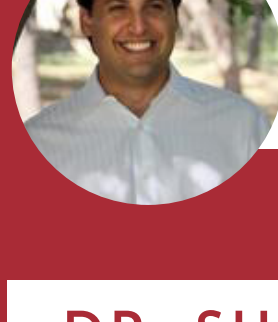
### ELIMINATE HAZARDS AT HOME

About half of all falls happen at home. A home safety check can help identify potential fall hazards that need to be removed or changed, such as tripping hazards, clutter, and poor lighting. Some common tips include:

- Remove things you can trip over (such as papers, books, clothes, and shoes) from stairs and places where you walk
- Install handrails and lights on all staircases
- Remove small throw rugs or use double-sided tape to keep the rugs from slipping
- Keep items you use often in cabinets you can reach without using a step stool
- Install grab bars inside or next to the tub or shower, as well as next to your toilet
- Use non-slip mats in the bathtub and on shower floors
- Be sure your lighting in the home is as bright as possible for optimal vision
- Wear shoes both inside and outside the house and avoid going barefoot

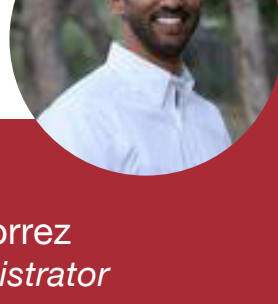


## MEET THE TEAM



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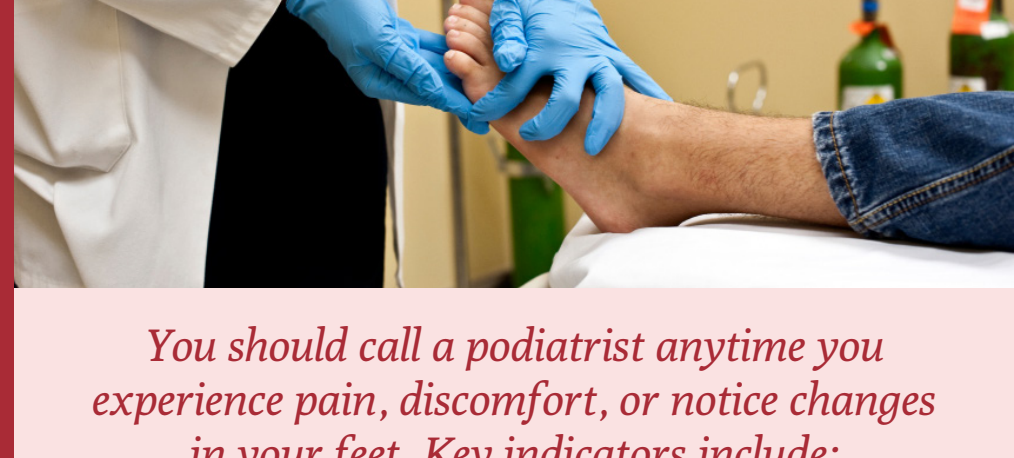
Tana Hager  
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Carolyn McCarty  
Clinical Coordinator

Monica Velez  
Clinical Scribe

Amanda Wilson  
Director of Community Relations

## WHEN SHOULD YOU CALL A PODIATRIST?



***You should call a podiatrist anytime you experience pain, discomfort, or notice changes in your feet. Key indicators include:***

- You have persistent pain in your feet or ankles.
- You see noticeable changes to your nails or skin.
- Your feet are severely cracking, scaling, or peeling.
- There are blisters on your feet.
- Your toenail is getting thicker and causing you discomfort.
- You have heel pain accompanied by a fever, redness or numbness and tingling in your heel.
- You have diabetes or certain other diseases that affect your feet.

## REFERRALS

### YOU MEAN THE WORLD TO US!

There is no greater compliment you can pay us than to entrust us with the referral of a friend or family member. We'd like to thank the following people for doing so this past month:

Jenny G. • Nicole W. • Kathy P. • Joel C. • Laura K. • Janak P. • Mike D. • Dawn K. • Marisela J. Tracy N. • Lori S. • Judy Y. • Kellen V. • Scott D. • David H. • Hassan V. • Barbara C. Jim R. • Trung N. • Mandi M. • Edward A. • Julia O. • Derek F. • George H. • Cathy K.

*If you pass along our name to someone close to you, please let us know so we can say thanks!*

## BIRTHDAY GREETINGS!

Look for a special email in your inbox when your birthday rolls around, created just for you!

If you don't receive your birthday greeting but would like to in the future, please visit our Contact Page and let us know the date!

## FREE BOOKS

### FOR A LIMITED TIME!



Choose from four books offering helpful tips and treatments for diabetic foot care, running, heel pain and general foot pain.

These great resources were written by the knowledgeable doctors of Austin Foot and Ankle Specialists.

**CLICK HERE FOR YOUR  
FREE BOOKS NOW!**

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[www.austinfootandankle.com](http://www.austinfootandankle.com)

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