

## MEET YOUR TEAM

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## REFERRALS 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:

Amy E.	Leslie P.
Annie W.	Maria C.
Donald J.	Michelle B.
Erin W.	Pat T.
Gus A.	Peggy G.
Jim F.	Soozi G.
Jose G.	Stephen H.
Kenneth D.	Terese H.

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

## BIRTHDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS

To view this month's birthdays, please [click here](#).

Is your birthday coming up?

Go to our [contact page](#) to submit your birthday or announcement so we can be sure to recognize our patients' and friends' special day!

## QUESTION OF THE MONTH

*Could my foot fracture be an early sign of osteoporosis?*

- Alice C., Pflugerville

While some foot fractures can be attributed to exertive exercise, such as marathon training, those foot and ankle injuries that are less easy to explain can be even more unsettling.

Unexplained foot fractures may be the first sign of osteoporosis, a bone thinning disease that affects over 28 million Americans and accounts for 1.5 million bone fractures a year.

Osteoporosis is frequently referred to as the "silent crippler," since it often progresses without any symptoms or isn't diagnosed until a person experiences pain from a bone fracture. The porous nature of bones in people with osteoporosis makes them more susceptible to bone fractures, especially in the feet.

While osteoporosis is most commonly seen in women over age 50, younger people and men are also affected. Early symptoms can include increased pain with walking accompanied by redness and swelling on the top of the foot.

Foot and ankle surgeons are able to diagnose osteoporosis through bone densitometry tests, which measure calcium and mineral levels in the bones through low-dose radiation x-ray, or possibly through a routine x-ray.

Visit our [Contact Page](#) to submit your question and receive your gift of Miracle Foot Cream if yours is chosen to be featured in our monthly newsletter!

## 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 effect your feet.

## THE PERFECT VALENTINE'S DAY GIFT:

# A Romantic Foot Massage



WITH VALENTINE'S DAY NEARING, AUSTIN FOOT & ANKLE SPECIALISTS IS PLEASED TO SHARE A NO-COST GIFT IDEA FOR YOUR SIGNIFICANT OTHER THAT MAY BE MORE ROMANTIC, AND BETTER APPRECIATED, THAN MANY OTHER GIFTS YOU HAVE IN MIND.

### RECIPE FOR A DELIGHTFUL FOOT MASSAGE:

**1** Soak feet in warm water for about 10 minutes, adding drops of favorite essential oils or bath salts such as peppermint or lavender.

**2** Apply a moderate amount of moisturizer or oil to the hands to comfort and ease the process.

**3** Begin by rubbing between cords located on top of the foot at instep. Move from toe to ankle, then smooth the sole of the foot gently before increasing pressure.

**4** Make circular motions with your thumb and fingers over the sole of the foot, and use more pressure in areas such as the heel and ball of the foot.

**5** Hold the foot with one hand, while using the other hand to gently rotate the foot and loosen the joints, first at the ankle and then near the ball of the foot.

**6** Knead the sole by holding the foot with one hand and making a fist with the other, applying moderate pressure into the sole.

**7** Begin with the big toe and work toward the pinky toe, working on each toe individually. Roll the toe between your thumb and forefinger, applying gentle pressure from base to end. Gently squeeze the end of each toe.

**8** Use your index finger to massage between each toe, your thumb and fingers to make circular motions once again over the sole, and end by rubbing the sole and instep lengthwise with your thumbs.

**9** Wipe off any excess cream or oil with a soft towel.

**10** Try to give equal attention to both feet, to ensure the even release of tension and avoid further discomfort.



## Enjoying Pregnancy WITHOUT FOOT PAIN

It's not uncommon to hear a pregnant woman complain of aching feet. But are sore feet just another symptom that women should deal with during pregnancy? The answer is a resounding, "no," and there are many remedies available to help alleviate foot pain.

Women often experience foot pain during pregnancy because of increased weight, foot instability and swelling. Here are a few helpful tips to help reduce foot pain during pregnancy:

### PAINFUL, SWOLLEN FEET

Pregnant women often experience throbbing, swollen feet due to excess fluid buildup (edema) in the feet from the weight and position of the baby. To reduce swelling, put feet up whenever possible, stretch legs frequently, wear wide comfortable shoes and don't cross legs when sitting.

### ARCH PAIN

Pain in the arch can be due to both arch fatigue or over-pronation (rolling the foot inward). Over-pronation causes extreme stress to the ligament (the plantar fascia) that holds up the arch of the foot. The best way to prevent arch pain is to stretch daily in the morning and before and after any exercise, don't go barefoot and wear supportive, low-heeled shoes.

### INGROWN TOENAILS

Excessive stress from tight fitting shoes causes painful ingrown toenails. Give your feet a break: wear wider shoes during the last trimester of pregnancy. If you do experience an ingrown toenail, avoid attempting "bathroom surgery." Repeated cutting of the nail can cause the condition to worsen over time. It is best to seek treatment with a foot and ankle surgeon.

Pregnancy and pending motherhood should be a joy. If your foot pain persists, contact Austin Foot & Ankle Specialists for an appointment and to learn about a number of conservative treatment options, such as physical therapy, foot orthotics, supportive shoes and daily nail grooming procedures.

## Common Runners' Injury:

## STRESS FRACTURES OF THE FOOT

Stress fractures of the foot are becoming more common in runners, especially first-time marathoners.

The growing popularity of marathons among beginning runners has contributed to the increase in repetitive stress injuries, including stress fractures of the foot. Often, first-time marathoners enter a race with little or improper long-distance training. The lack of experience coupled with the repetitive impact placed on the feet during the run can produce enough stress to cause hairline breaks in the bones of the foot.

Runners who increase their mileage too quickly or change to a more intense phase of training may be more susceptible to a stress fracture due to the increased force placed on the bones," says Dr. Craig Thomajan of Austin Foot & Ankle Specialists. "A general rule of thumb for runners is to increase the mileage by no more than 10 percent each week. Runners who are training also need to have adequate rest time in between runs to help decrease the risk of a fracture."

Runners at all levels of experience are also at higher risk for stress fractures if they wear improper shoes while running, suffer from flatfoot or other foot deformities, or have osteoporosis. Signs of a stress fracture can include pain, swelling, redness and possibly bruising of the area.

If a break is suspected, Dr. Thomajan advises runners to immediately follow the **RICE** protocol—**R**est, **I**ce, **C**ompression and **E**levation. If pain and swelling last longer than a few days, an appointment for an x-ray and diagnosis is in order.

In most cases, treatment includes rest and immobilization with casting of the foot. Surgery may be required in certain instances to repair and stabilize a stress fracture that has progressed into a full fracture.

Runners can take action to prevent repetitive stress injuries in their feet by wearing supportive athletic shoes and slowly building up their activity levels according to their abilities.

Running is one of life's most enjoyable, rewarding exercises, but it's important to listen to your body and be mindful of any foot or ankle issues that could prevent you from achieving your short- or long-term goals.



## FREE EDUCATION REGARDING FOOT CARE FOR RUNNERS AND DIABETICS

If you know of a friend, family member or colleague that may be interested in learning how to prevent foot issues resulting from running or diabetes, please take advantage of our complimentary books, *Diabetes and Your Feet* and *Keep Running! Identify and prevent common running injuries*.

Both were written by Dr. Craig Thomajan, founder of Austin Foot and Ankle Specialists.

[CLICK HERE](#) TO REQUEST YOUR COMPLIMENTARY COPIES!