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Exercises for Feet

There is a medical saying, “If you don’t use it then you will lose it, or it’s function”.

Muscles of the feet need to be in good working order and condition as with any muscle of the body, therefore, exercise of the feet is an important factor to well-being in both young and old.

The feet contain ¼ of all bones in the body. Each foot contains 28 bones, 112 ligaments and is activated by 20 internal muscles plus the muscles of the leg. These, muscles need regular exercise to give them enough strength to maintain the position and function of the foot.

How to Exercise

When doing exercises for the feet, as with any other exercise, start slowly and easily. Pick one or two of the exercises and repeat each movement two or three times – do these daily. At the end of a week add on another exercise and gradually increase the number from 10 to 15.

WARNING: Elderly persons, those overweight or suffering from a recent ankle injury, it is advisable to start exercises seated and not weight bearing.

Exercises:

1. Walk a couple of blocks each day wearing a low-heeled shoe. For a few steps try to walk with a heel-toe movement rising on the toes.
2. Sit on a chair with your bare feet on the floor and try to pick up a pencil with your toes, this stretches the tendons on the top of the toes.
3. While seated put one leg over the other, bend the upper foot up and down, then rotate around clockwise and then counter clockwise. Repeat with the other leg. This flexes the ankle joints.
4. Stand flat on your feet and rise up on your toes. This helps strengthen calves and flexes arches.
5. Stand with your feet apart and bend toes up as far as possible. This strengthens toe muscles.

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6. Roll your bare feet over an item such as a wooden rolling pin, do not use a bottle or empty can as they may break and cause an injury. This exercise helps flexibility and circulation.

**After several months of the preceding exercises,
try adding one or two of the following:**

- A. In a standing position roll your feet outwards so that you are standing on the outer borders of your feet. You can start this exercise seated until strength and flexibility increases. This relaxes the inner arch.
- B. Stand stiff kneed with your legs crossed (Like a scissor) and with your feet slightly apart so that the weight of the body is evenly distributed. Hold for a minute or two. This brings into use your muscles of balance.
- C. Sit on the floor with your legs straight ahead and bend your feet upwards as far as possible. This strengthens the muscles of the calf and heel.
- D. Sit on the floor with your legs straight ahead and turn the soles of your feet together. This strengthens the arch and tones up the calf.
- E. Leaning up against the wall with your arms in front of you, raise your foot up backwards and try to touch your buttocks. This loosens the knee, back, thigh and hip muscles. You can also progress to doing this lying on the floor.

The above exercises, incorporated into a wider exercise program, are aimed at maintaining mobility in the legs and back as well as helping to prevent or relieve problems of pain, etc. They will also help with such every day things as putting on shoes and stockings and generally keep one more mobile.