

Foot Facts

- Seventy-five percent of Americans will experience foot health problems of varying degrees of severity at one time or another in their lives.
- The foot is an intricate structure containing 26 bones. Thirty-three joints, 107 ligaments, 19 muscles, and tendons that hold the structure together and allow it to move in a variety of ways.
- The 52 bones in your feet make up about one quarter of all the bones in your body.
- Women have about four times as many foot problems as men; lifelong patterns of wearing high heels often are the culprit.
- The American Podiatric Medical Association says the average person takes 8,000 to 10,000 steps a day. Those cover several miles, and they all add up to about 115,000 miles in a lifetime -- more than four times the circumference of the globe.
- There are times when you're walking that the pressure on your feet exceeds your body weight, and when you're running, it can be three or four times your weight.
- Shopping for shoes is best done in the afternoon, says the American Podiatric Medical Association. Your feet swell a little during the day, and it's best to buy shoes to fit them then. Have your feet measured every time you purchase shoes, and do it while you're standing. When you try on shoes, try them on both feet; many people have one foot larger than the other, and it's best to fit the larger one.
- Your feet mirror your general health. Such conditions as arthritis, diabetes, nerve and circulatory disorders can show their initial symptoms in the feet -- so foot ailments can be your first sign of more serious medical problems.
- There are about 13,320 podiatrists actively in practice in the United States, and they receive more than 60 million visits a year from people with any number of foot ailments. Yet that's probably only a fraction of the number of foot problems. Mostly, say podiatrists, that's because many people have the erroneous notion that their feet are supposed to hurt.
- There are approximately 250,000 sweat glands in a pair of feet, and they excrete as much as half a pint of moisture each day.
- About 19% of the US population has an average of 1.4 foot problems each year.
- About 6% of the US population has foot injuries, bunions, and flat feet or fallen arches each year.
- About 60 percent of all foot and ankle injuries, reported by the US population older than 17, were sprains and strains of the ankle.
- Podiatric physicians are the major providers of foot care services, providing 39% of all foot care (orthopedic physicians provide 13% of all foot care, all other physicians provide 37% of all foot care, and physical therapists and others provide 11% of all foot care).

Sources for the data are the American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine, American Hospital Association, American Podiatric Medical Association, Council on Podiatric Medical Education, Podiatry Insurance Company of America, United States Bureau of the Census, and United States Department of Health and Human Services.