

## In This Issue

Prepare for Walkathons | Foot Pain Shouldn't Ruin Your Golf Swing | Kids' Foot Conditions | Smoking & Bone Healing

## Prepare for Spring Walkathons to Avoid Foot & Ankle Injuries

As the long winter winds down, you might be anxious to sign up for a spring charity walk to support your favorite cause. However, without adequate preparation, long-distance walking after spending the past few months mostly indoors can result in pain or injury to the tendons and bones in your feet and ankles. The risk is especially high if you do not engage in regular exercise.

Walking is often considered an easy, low-impact activity, but that is not always the case. Walking for longer periods of time or for long distances can take a toll on your body's support structures. Over longer distances, your feet and ankles can swell or become sore or you could twist an ankle, develop tendonitis or rupture an Achilles tendon. And if you have bunions or diabetes, you are more likely to suffer a foot or ankle injury if you do not properly prepare for the event.

While conditioning programs to help participants prepare for a distance walk are limited, you can get ready by walking a little bit each day in the weeks leading up to the event. Gradually increase the intensity and duration of your walks and listen to your body.

Know when to take a break and be aware of the signs of a minor injury in your feet and ankles to help prevent it from turning into a major injury.

**Schedule an appointment with your local foot and ankle surgeon to have your feet and ankles evaluated before a walking event and to get tips on proper training techniques. To find a foot and ankle surgeon near you, visit [FootHealthFacts.org](http://FootHealthFacts.org).**



## Is Foot Pain Ruining Your Golf Swing?



As you head to your favorite golf course this spring, make sure your feet are in shape before approaching the tee box. Your big toe, heel and ball of your foot are the spots most likely to cause pain that can ruin your golf swing.

Behind these pain-prone spots can lie stiff joints, stretched-out tissues and even nerve damage. However, pain relief is possible and often does not require surgery.

The three most common foot conditions that can affect your perfect golf swing are:

- neuromas
- arthritis
- heel pain

Neuromas are nerves that become thickened, enlarged and painful because they have been compressed or irritated. A neuroma in the ball of your foot can cause significant pain as your body transfers its weight from one foot to the other while swinging the club.

Arthritis can cause pain in the joint of your big toe and can make it difficult to follow through with a swing.

Heel pain typically results from an inflammation of the plantar fascia (the band of tissue that extends from your heel to the ball of your foot). Heel pain can make it difficult for golfers to maintain a solid stance during crucial portions of the swing.

Other conditions, such as ankle arthritis or ankle instability, can affect how your weight shifts during a golf swing. Achilles tendonitis can also throw off your balance during a swing, while ill-fitting golf shoes may cause corns and calluses that make standing and walking uncomfortable.

**Make sure your feet and ankles are in top condition before you hit the green this spring by scheduling an appointment with a foot and ankle surgeon. Visit [FootHealthFacts.org](http://FootHealthFacts.org) to locate a foot and ankle surgeon in your area.**