



Treading Lightly

Treadmills are a great way to exercise indoors — at home or at the gym. Whether you're a newbie to exercise in general or to treadmill usage in particular, the following precautions can minimize your risk of lower-extremity injury.

First, familiarize yourself with the treadmill, its safety features, and how to utilize them. Proper footwear — good arch support and plenty of cushioning — is essential. Moisture-wicking socks can help you cut down on blisters.

Lightly stretch those calves, Achilles tendons, and bottoms of the feet before setting out. This will improve flexibility and ease the effects of repetitive impact. Stretch after your workout too. And don't forget proper hydration.

Don't start off your workout like gangbusters. Start slow and ease into your desired speed. And listen to your body; don't go too long, as fatigue makes you more vulnerable to injury. Focus on your posture and running technique to reduce injury risk. Don't lean too far forward or backward. Avoid overstriding, as this ratchets up the stress on your feet and legs. Keep your steps shorter and quicker to maintain a smooth gait and diminish impact.

Adjust the incline from time to time, and rotate between jogging and walking to reduce repetitive strain. And don't do the treadmill every day. Alternate with some low-impact activities like cycling or swimming.

Sometimes, injuries just happen; however, by adhering to the basics, you will lower your odds of them occurring. Common treadmill-related maladies include Achilles tendonitis, plantar fasciitis, stress fractures, shin splints, ankle sprains, and ruptured tendons.

If you develop persistent foot or ankle pain, schedule an appointment at our office for a thorough evaluation, accurate diagnosis, and effective treatment.



Fibromyalgia and Foot Pain

Fibromyalgia is a complex, chronic condition that affects how the brain processes pain. It's akin to a hypersensitive security system; the brain interprets normal bodily signals as threats and creates widespread sensations of pain. In addition, fibromyalgia can disrupt sleep, drain one's energy, and lead to anxiety or depression. Symptoms can vary in intensity from person to person, and may come and go.

An estimated 5% of the population has fibromyalgia, with 90% of cases involving women, possibly influenced by hormonal fluctuations. It can be triggered by an accident, long illness (e.g., Lyme disease or Epstein-Barr), or a period of intense stress.

A study published in *Arthritis Research and Therapy* found that 50% of people with fibromyalgia experience foot pain. In many cases, there is no structural issue with the foot. In addition, what most people would consider minor or mild foot discomfort or irritation is often felt with much more intensity by a fibromyalgia sufferer.

Fibromyalgia pain and discomfort can lead to changes in one's gait. Stress is shifted to other areas of the body, such as the ankles, knees, hips, and back, and can cause injury. And again, those with fibromyalgia who also have conditions such as plantar fasciitis, overpronation, flat feet, or high arches will frequently experience exacerbated pain.

If your feet are affected by fibromyalgia, or if you have a foot condition that aggravates it, make us part of your fibromyalgia support team! We can prescribe medication and/or orthotics and treat underlying foot conditions to help you manage your fibromyalgia pain. Lifestyle modifications (e.g., daily exercise, healthy diet, addressing sleep issues, and reducing stress), Epsom salt foot soaks, and supportive shoes can also aid your cause.

Mark Your Calendars

- Feb. 2** Groundhog Day: During hibernation, a groundhog takes two breaths per minute (down from its normal 16).
- Feb. 6** Winter Olympics begin: How about a fourth medal for curling? Curling gold; curling silver; curling bronze; and curling iron.
- Feb. 14** Valentine's Day: "Love at first sight" is a myth. Immediate attraction? Yes. True love? No.
- Feb. 16** Presidents' Day: There have been 47 U.S. presidents to this point. Only 14 have served two (or more) terms.
- Feb. 23** Tennis Day: Tennis great Chris Evert lost (broke) her diamond line bracelet during a 1978 U.S. Open match, delaying the match until she recovered it. The "tennis bracelet" was born.
- Feb. 28** Tooth Fairy Day: According to one recent national survey, a child can expect an average of \$4.57 under the pillow for a lost tooth.





A Stone's Throw

Curling — which some call shuffleboard on ice — seems like a fairly new sport, but 500+ years of history say otherwise.

Curling's written history began in the mid-1500s in Scotland. Notary John McQuhin recorded a challenge issued by a monk to a representative of the abbot (the head of the monastery): Throw stones across a frozen body of water and see who gets closer to the target.

Around that same time, paintings from Flemish artist Peter Bruegel the Elder depicted the sport being played by teams — competitions between members of the same parish, parish vs. parish, or one occupation vs. another. A prize would often be at stake, with one example being the victors receiving dinner and toddies from the vanquished.

By the 1800s, abundant composers of verse waxed poetic about curling during the early Romantic period. Its popularity led to the establishment of a governing body: the Grand Caledonian Curling Club, which today is known as the Royal Caledonian Curling Club. The name change was spawned in 1843 by Queen Victoria's fascination with the sport. She reportedly tried her hand at it, but according to The Curling History Blog, the curling stones "proved to be too heavy for her delicate arm."

Curling debuted in the first Olympic Winter Games in France in 1924 but then went dormant as a full-fledged Olympic sport until 1998. The winning team in 1924 was not officially recognized by the International Olympic Committee until 2006. No member of the team was available to note the momentous occasion.

Today, curling's popularity is steadily growing throughout the United States. Clubs can even be found in Florida and Hawaii! Catch curling's majesty at this year's Winter Olympic Games in northern Italy.



Herbed Gnocchi and Mushrooms

Servings: 2

A romantic, elegant, and delicious option for two on Valentine's Day.

Ingredients

- 8 ounces fresh or frozen gnocchi
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- 4 ounces cremini mushrooms, stems removed and quartered
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup dry white wine, such as sauvignon blanc or pinot grigio
- ½ cup fresh basil leaves, coarsely chopped
- Juice from 1/2 medium lemon
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Grated Parmesan cheese, for serving (optional)

Directions

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the gnocchi according to the package instructions, drain, and set aside.
2. Meanwhile, heat 2 tablespoons of the butter in a large frying pan over medium heat. When the butter is melted and bubbling, add the mushrooms to the pan. Season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and lightly browned, 4 to 5 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute.
3. Pour in the wine to deglaze the pan, scrape up any browned bits at the bottom of the pan, and cook until the wine is reduced by half. Add the remaining 2 tablespoons butter, gnocchi, basil, and lemon juice. Swirl the ingredients around the pan so everything is well-coated, and cook until heated through and the flavors meld, 1 to 2 minutes. Serve immediately, topped with grated Parmesan cheese if desired.

RECIPE NOTES: Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days. Store any uncooked gnocchi in an airtight container in the freezer for up to 3 months.

Recipe courtesy of www.thekitchn.com.



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Sprains Aren't Just for Ankles

When it comes to sprains, ankles capture most of the attention. And for good reason. But midfoot sprains cause their own share of trouble.

A midfoot sprain is an injury that results in overstretched or torn ligaments between the arch and the toes. (The midfoot as a whole includes a complex of bones, joints, and soft tissues that are pivotal to maintaining foot stability and flexibility.) Like an ankle sprain, a midfoot sprain typically produces pain, discomfort, swelling, and difficulty in walking or bearing weight.



Midfoot sprains can result from direct trauma to the foot, such as that caused by a car accident, a heavy object falling on the foot, or other forceful impact. Falling backward while your foot is in a fixed position makes you vulnerable too. Any force that compresses the toes and heel together paves the way for a midfoot sprain.

Sports that involve sudden changes in direction, jumping, or running can cause this injury too. Football, soccer, basketball, and gymnastics come to mind. Falling directly on one's toes, which ballet dancers may occasionally do, can have the same effect.

An injury to the Lisfranc ligament is doubly bad news. If this critical ligament is overstretched or torn, the entire midfoot area may become unstable. Pain and swelling will be more severe than a "regular" sprain, and bruising may appear at the top and bottom of the foot. Lisfranc joint injuries may also include fractured or dislocated bones, making it a serious injury.

Conservative treatment measures have a great success rate for "regular" midfoot sprains that are tended to promptly. Call our office to get the ball rolling.