

Feet: Gateway to Health

Submitted by: Red Hot PR

Wednesday, 19 May 2004

PRESS RELEASE

Issued on behalf of Padders, May 04

by Red Hot PR

For further information contact Liz, Jules or Annette

@ Red Hot PR, +44 (0)207 723 9191, info@redhotpr.co.uk

What reduces the chances of contracting breast cancer by 20%, heart disease by 30%, and diabetes by 50%?
Walking!

Following hot on the heels of the Chief Medical Officer's stark warning about Britain's 'couch potato' culture, Padders* (makers of Feelgood Feet shoes, ideal for health walks) commissioned a new survey to establish the way people consider and treat their feet.

At some point in their lives most people (75%-80%) will suffer problems with their feet. Three in four foot complaints are due to ill fitting shoes - yet an astonishing 36% of 16 to 24 year olds and 27% of over 65 year olds (approximately 2.5million) admit to buying shoes that do not fit properly! Is this due to vanity or damaged feet or lack of proper advice/expert fitting? The survey conducted between 7th & 9th May 2004 by BMRB on behalf of Padders showed that in the East Midlands people are most likely to purchase shoes that don't fit (35%). It also established that consumers in London (42%) are the most likely to judge a person by the shoes they wear – whereas in the East Midlands (20%) and the North (20%) they are least likely to care. The Welsh came out top for being the most foot shy (15%) and would rather not bare their soles! (Call for more regional and age stats).

Without feet we'd be pretty stuck! The foot has 26 bones, 19 muscles, over 100 ligaments and thousands of nerve endings. Unbelievably in a lifetime our feet will carry us as far as the moon and back!.

It would seem that as a nation we don't place enough value on our feet – one of the most crucial gateways to overall health. Although Padders appreciate vanity will always remain one of the seven deadly sins and would never suggest tossing out those Jimmy Choo's and Manolo Blahnik 's, they do advise that by wearing comfortable shoes that FIT - ideally fitted by an expert - the majority of wearers will be encouraged to walk further for longer and thus improve their overall health as well as enjoying one of the simplest and easiest forms of exercise.

In addition to this survey and to further reflect its reputation for footcare, Padders have joined forces with reflexologist Louise Sanders of Feet First, who will be advising the company on reflexology issues and providing consumers with information via mailings and PR.

PADDERS – www.padders.co.uk

Established since 1904

- Family run business

- Highly recommended by Chiropodists and Podiatrists
- 1200 retailers throughout the UK
- 'Feelgood Feet' Shoes designed to mould to your Foot
- Makers of comfortable, quality, good value and great fitting shoes
- Available primarily through specialist footwear retailers who provide shoe fitting services
- Received one of the of the highest ever SATRA Comfort Index ratings and were highly commended by the Good Housekeeping Institute
- The company prides itself on offering a range of shoes in half sizes and with adjustable fittings to provide optimum fit

FEET FACTS

Sources BMRB (May 04) and Society of Chiropodists & Podiatrists (April 04)

- Between 75% and 80% of the adult population suffer from some form of foot problem
 - 75% of the adult populations foot complaints can be traced to ill fitting shoes
 - Females are four times more likely to suffer problems with the feet
 - 36% of 16 to 24 year olds purchase ill fitting shoes. Until the age of 65 this percentage decreases but at 65+ years
 - 27% purchase ill fitting shoes. There are approximately 2.5 million people aged over 65 in the UK.
 - One in five people think that their feet are the most unattractive part of the body yet only 11% of us are embarrassed about showing them!
 - 93% of men are not at all concerned about baring their feet – is this a reflection of their egos?
 - 30% of all adults judge people by the shoes they wear whilst women make up the vast majority of this percentage` (33%)
 - 1.2 million people visit an NHS podiatrist a year
 - The average adult takes an average 4,000 to 6,000 steps a day. The Japanese say 10,000 steps is the route to health
 - The foot is the first part of the body to stop growing
 - Our feet carry us the equivalent of five times round the earth in an average lifetime
 - There are more sweat glands per square inch on our feet than anywhere else on the body and the average pair gives off about half a pint of perspiration a day
 - Feet can mirror general health – conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, neurological and circulatory disorders may show initial symptoms in the feet
 - The expression 'cold feet' originated amongst soldiers in the 19th Century, unable to rush into battle due to frozen feet
- What is Reflexology?
- Reflexology is a form of 'alternative' or 'complementary' medicine and involves a method of treatment using massage to reflex areas found in the feet and the hands. Most commonly, the feet are used as the

areas to be treated.

In the feet, there are reflex areas corresponding to all the parts of the body and these areas are arranged in such a way as to form a map of the body in the feet with the right foot corresponding to the right side of the body and the left foot corresponding to the left side of the body. By having the whole body represented in the feet, the method offers a means of treating the whole body and of treating the body as a whole. This latter point is an important factor of a natural therapy and allows not only symptoms to be treated but also the causes of symptoms.

The method has been used for several thousands of years and is known to have been practised in a similar manner by the Chinese and the Egyptians. More recently, Reflexology was described in the form in which it is now known by the late Eunice Ingham, an

American lady, who based her method of treatment on work called 'Zone Therapy' which had been described some years earlier in the 1920's by an American, Dr. William Fitzgerald. The main pioneer of Reflexology in Great Britain was the late Doreen Bayly who introduced the method in the early 1960's and whose great determination to stimulate awareness and interest in the method should not be forgotten.

Reflexology does not claim to be a 'cure-all' but numerous different disorders have been successfully treated by this method. These disorders include such things as migraine, sinus problems, hormonal imbalances, breathing disorders, digestive problems, circulatory problems, back problems and tension and stress. Most people who have experienced treatment would agree that the method can be most beneficial and is also a very relaxing therapy.

Top Tips for Feet

- Feet are complex structures, which may reflect your general health and well-being. Symptoms such as persistent pain or soreness are warning signs. If, for example, you neglect a painful joint, it can deteriorate and become acutely painful. Then you may start walking badly to avoid the pain and that can lead to more serious postural problems.
- Your feet can mirror your general health – conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, neurological and circulatory disorders may show initial symptoms in the feet.
- Wear footwear that supports the foot properly, reducing the chance of injury. Padders advise having shoes fitted by an expert whenever possible.
- Consider wearing shoes with a strap or lace over the instep rather than slip-ons. This will help stop your foot sliding forward, a bit like a seatbelt in a car.
- Choose footwear made of natural materials (or breathable hi tech fabrics such as Gore-Tex®) to help feet to breathe.
- Vary shoe shapes and heel heights from day to day. For everyday use, keep heel heights to about 4cm
- Air trainers before and after exercise to prevent build up of bacteria.
- Change stockings or socks at least once a day. Choose socks containing at least 70 per cent cotton or wool. Some socks made from man-made fibres can help keep sweat away from the skin, keeping the skin dry

and reducing odour.

- Diabetes can affect the feet. People suffering from diabetes may experience poor circulation and sensation in their feet. Even the smallest injury can lead to infection, which, if not treated promptly, may lead to serious complications. If you have diabetes, it is important to examine your feet daily. Anyone with diabetes should consult their podiatrist regularly and have a full annual review and assessment.
- If you suffer from knee, hip or back pain, which has resisted treatment, consider visiting a state-registered chiropodist or podiatrist. Sometimes a small structural or functional imbalance in the foot may cause problems further up the body. What you wear on your feet can affect you further up your body.

Workout for Feet:

- Sitting with your feet up for 10 minutes after a long day helps circulation.
- Circle your feet ten times in each direction, keeping your leg as still as possible.
- Consciously straighten your toes and wriggle them around.
- Raise, point, then curl your toes for five seconds each, repeated ten times – this is particularly good for toe cramps or hammer toes.
- Circle the alphabet with your feet. (A good exercise you can do while sitting at your desk in the office.)
- Calf stretches help to keep feet supple and keep a good range of movement. To stretch your calf and heel, stand facing a wall with feet hip width apart and slightly bent at the knee. Take one step forwards, and using your arms to lean against the wall, keep your leg in front bent and the leg behind straight. Both feet should be flat on the ground. Lean in towards the wall, as you do, you should feel your muscles stretching in your calf and heel. Hold and slowly return to a standing position. Do this with each leg about five times. Seek further help if you experience problems doing this exercise.
- To refresh feet, massage gently with a foot roller, or better still, ask your partner to massage your feet.
- Sitting with feet raised for 10 minutes after a long day helps circulation

Soc Chiropodists & Podiatrists 29-Apr-2004

Categories: Footnote, Keeping Feet Healthy

Sources of reference:

Society of chiropodists and podiatrists

0207 234 8620

Institute of chiropodists and podiatrists
0191 297 0464

Podiatry Progress
james.sheridan@algeos.com

The foot pressure interest group
0117 344 8507

Associated Chiropodists and Podiatrists Union
01283 741 174

Alliance of Private Sector Chiropody and Podiatry Practitioners
0121 559 2772