



FOOT SENSE

A monthly newsletter from your podiatrist



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How to Prevent Foot Blisters When Hiking

It's a gorgeous day. You're out hiking with your friends or family and then you get a painful burn in the back of your heel. You take off your boot and sure enough, you have a blister.



Blisters are among the most common foot problems you'll encounter when hiking. They are small pockets of fluid that develop under the skin. When you hike they occur from a combination of moisture, pressure, heat, and friction. Fortunately, there's a lot you can do to stop them from occurring.

Buy Boots That Fit to Prevent Blisters

Proper fitting boots are essential for a safe and blister-free hike. A well-fitted boot should help eliminate the pressure and friction that leads to blisters. The key things to consider when shopping for boots is making sure they are:

- stable and supportive
- comfortable
- durable, warm, and either waterproof or water resistant
- the correct length and width

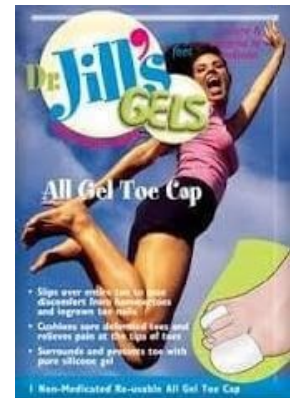
Find a store that specializes in hiking boots, like REI. For more information about shopping for boots, download our eBook, "[How to Buy Hiking Boots to Prevent Plantar Fasciitis](#)".



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Toe Cap
\$12





Geth is on her way to
nursing school!

Curried Chick Pea Sandwich

For a change of pace and for those vegans out there, here's a delicious new way to use chick peas.

Source: [Delish-Justin Sullivan](#)

- 1 (15-oz.) can chickpeas
- 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium white onion, finely chopped
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and minced (optional)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tsp. cumin seeds
- 1 tbsp. curry powder
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- 1 tsp. turmeric
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 c. mayonnaise or vegan mayonnaise
- 2 tsp. lime juice
- 1/2 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1/2 small red onion, chopped
- 1/4 c. fresh cilantro, finely chopped
- Toasted sourdough bread, for serving
- Butter lettuce, for serving
- Thinly sliced tomato, for serving



Thoroughly drain the can of chickpeas. Spread chickpeas onto a baking sheet and dry with paper towels. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, heat oil until it shimmers. Add white onion and jalapeño and cook until the onion has fully softened and begun to turn golden, 7 to 8 minutes.

Add garlic and cumin seeds and cook, stirring often, for 2 to 3 minutes, or until very fragrant and the cumin seeds begin to pop. Sprinkle over curry powder, coriander, turmeric, salt and pepper. Toss and toast for 2 minutes, or until the onion has taken on a darker color.

Add chickpeas and cook, tossing occasionally, so that the chickpeas are coated in the spice mixture, and have started to crisp in places.

Transfer chickpea mixture to a large bowl and cool for 10 minutes. Once cooled, use a potato masher to mash the chickpeas until you have a homogeneous, almost dough-like, consistency, with some whole chickpeas still intact.

Fold in mayo, lime juice, bell pepper, red onion, and cilantro. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Top toasted bread with chickpea salad, butter lettuce, and sliced tomato and serve.

Even though this book is focused on plantar fasciitis, many of the same principles hold for preventing blisters.

Break In New Boots

While not all hiking boots require a break-in period, most with stiffer leather will. Here's how:

- Walk around your house and your neighborhood in your new boots.
- Be sure to wear the socks and any orthotics or inserts you plan to wear when hiking when you do.
- Gradually add some weight to your backpack during the break-in time.

Use Lacing Techniques to Keep Your Heel From Slipping In Your Boots

Hikers with narrow heels might struggle to keep their heels from slipping even with a properly fitted boot.

Slipping heels can cause blisters due to the constant friction. To help keep your heels back in your boot, try a Surgeon's Knot.



Keep Your Feet Cool and Dry to Prevent Blisters While Hiking

Moisture and heat are the other culprits when it comes to blister formation. Keeping your feet as dry as possible will help you avoid blisters.

- Wear socks that wick away moisture. Keeping your feet cool and dry while you hike is critical to preventing them from forming. Socks that wick away moisture are key. When moisture evaporates it cools your feet.
- Wear thin liner socks. Liner socks are an important addition to prevent blisters. They're typically made from a synthetic material or wool.

They help prevent blisters by wicking away moisture from your feet and transferring it to your outer sock to evaporate. They also reduce friction.

- Bring extra socks with you. If your feet sweat a lot, it's a good idea to bring an extra pair of socks with you. Switch them out and let the others dry by attaching them to the outside of your backpack while hiking.
- Apply a foot powder with an antiperspirant. Another way to keep your feet dry and reduce friction is to apply an antiperspirant with powder just before hiking. We recommend Gordon's No. Five.

Use Surgical Tape to Reduce Friction

Using low-cost surgical tape over blister prone areas can reduce the incidence of blisters in those areas. If you have trouble getting tape to stick you can try applying some Tincture of Benzoin to help make the area stickier. This substance is also used as skin toughener.

Purchase Toe Caps

For hikers who tend to have painful toes, toe caps can help reduce friction while hiking. Dr. Jill's Gels makes them for the 4th and 5th toe, but you can also purchase them slightly larger for other toes.

Always Carry A Blister First Aid Kit When Hiking

- Moleskin
- Tincture of Benzoin (helps make moleskin and other tape stick)
- Surgical tape (to use before you hike)
- Blister bandages with pads and gels: Products like 2nd Skin can be used on both hot spots for prevention and for blister treatment.
- Alcohol wipes
- Antibiotic ointment.

Exploring Low Tides Around Seattle and Beyond

While many of us spend hours in the car driving to Cannon Beach and other far flung places to get in our beach time, there are plenty of great beaches right here in our own backyard.

One of the best things about living right on the Sound are the plethora of beaches that uncover amazing sea creatures at low tide. This is an especially great activity for kids of all ages.

Who doesn't like to do a bit of beachcombing, pick up some beautiful rocks and shells, and find an anemone or crab along with barnacles clinging to beach rocks.

Some of the best beaches to explore are Golden Garden in Ballard, Carkeek Beach in Broadview, Constellation Park Alki Beach in West Seattle, Richmond Beach Saltwater Park, and Brackett's Landing in Edmonds (kids can also watch scuba divers).

Make sure you check out the tide table before you go to ensure that the tide will be low enough to reveal the shoreline's living wonders. You can also check out the [Beach Naturalist Program through the Seattle Aquarium](#). They have a list of dates, times, and beaches where volunteer naturalists will be able to answer your questions.



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—*Dr. Rion Berg*

To make an appointment, call us at 206-368-7000.

