



Keep Feet Happy All Winter Long

by Dr. Eunice V. Ramsey-Parker, DPM, MPH, Foot Center of NY

Winter's here and the time is right for thinking about your feet! It may be cold outside but it can get awfully hot inside those winter boots. Everyone needs to give some thought to keeping their feet healthy and feeling good during the winter months.

Keeping feet warm and dry in the winter is paramount. Boots and shoes should fit properly with the kind of socks you will

wear – feet that feel jammed in or toes that are cramped will rub and develop blisters or corns, and it's hard to maintain warmth if circulation is inhibited. This is important for children's boots too – don't buy them big thinking that the kids will wear them for two seasons. They have to fit properly right away, or children may get blisters or chafing from the boot rubbing, may develop problems from their toes curling to

hold onto the shoe, and may trip or fall more easily.

Socks are really an important consideration. Make sure your socks fit well, are comfortable and aren't too loose or tight. That goes for pantyhose as well. Many socks will keep your feet warm, but dry, that's another issue. Cotton and/or wool socks are made of natural fibers that will absorb moisture, but will remain damp if your feet do get

sweaty. This is an issue for people who already have athlete's foot or fungal nails, and for folks who don't want to develop either one.

These folks or those with sweaty feet may prefer 'moisture-wicking' socks, socks made of synthetic fibers (such as polyester, acrylic or a blend with cotton or wool) that will transfer the sweat away from your foot to an outer layer of the sock so the feet remain dry. Runners and other winter

sports enthusiasts may prefer these socks as well. Shoes and boots made of leather breathe more than those made of synthetic materials.

Diabetics have additional winter weather considerations. Diabetics must always wear socks inside shoes and boots; in addition to fit, comfort and dryness, socks should be soft, with no seams but with a bit of padding under the foot. Your podiatrist is the best source of information about

socks and winter footwear for the diabetic foot.

Dr. Eunice V. Ramsey-Parker, DPM, MPH, is Clinic Administrator of the Foot Center of New York at 55 East 124th Street between Park and Madison Avenues. Learn more about the Foot Center at www.footcenterofnewyork.org.

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