



I suffer from an in-growing toenail – what is the best way to cut toe nails and what can I do about my nail as its very sore and inflamed?

Profoot's Foot Doctor, William Hutchings of the Diss Podiatry and Chiropody Clinic, Norfolk says:

In-growing toenails are one of the most common foot problems, and can be very sore and debilitating – often resulting in people limiting their activity as they are in so much pain.

In-growing toenails are often caused by the incorrect trimming of nails – cutting nails too short or snipping down the sides; resulting in nails growing and piercing into the surrounding skin causing soreness and swelling, and often infection.

Because more serious complications can develop, in-growing nails often require prompt professional attention by a qualified podiatrist. So whilst you wait for treatment, here are some suggestions to help avoid future problems, as well as tips to help relieve the associated pain.

- Trim toenails regularly – cutting straight across, leaving them slightly longer than the end of the toe, and don't forget to file the edge. Splits and cracks can occur as a result of edges exposed.
- When filing toenails, file straight across the nail using a swift single movement. Most people make the common mistake of filing back and forth, but that only leads to chipped or broken nails
- Avoid wearing tight fitting hosiery and socks. Non-man made materials will allow more movement around the toes
- If pressure from your shoes is causing further pain, try the Profoot Toe Protector, a gel sleeves which relieves virtually all pressure and friction whilst cushioning the entire toe and protecting it from rubbing.
- Ensure your footwear is fitting well, not too tight and not too narrow around the toes. Training shoes create a problem as they normally tend to push the toes together within the toe box area. Footwear which is loose can lead to ingrown nails on the lesser toes.
- Surgical spirit is a great astringent so to help relieve sore skin, place soaked cotton wool balls on the affected area, salt water is also good.
- If pus is present with swelling and pain, it means that the nail is breaking the skin and the body is performing an immune response, this means it's infected. At this point it's a good idea to contact your GP for a weeks course of antibiotics.