



**I enjoy a variety sports, but do suffer from a number of minor problems with my feet, which at times include heel pain, aching arches, blisters and corns. I often turn to the pharmacy for help but am confused by the array of products available?**

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

It's no fun kicking a ball with sore toes or running round the tennis court with blisters, and for people who regularly participate in sports, good foot care is vital. Obviously the basics, such as keeping your feet clean, dry and moisturised are key to good foot health, but there are other measures you can take to ensure comfort whatever the activity!

Heel Pain is also referred to as 'plantar faciatis', in lay terms this means inflammation of the heel. Common areas that become inflamed are bursae (fluid filled sacs which provide shock absorption to the heel), and tissue around the tendons which aid propulsion of the foot during activity. Any number of external factors that will put pressure on the heel can cause this, examples can range from not enough support in the shoe to an increase in activities which the body is unfamiliar with.

Treatment obviously can be complicated in certain individuals, however the majority of symptoms can be elevated with a heel cushion which adds further shock absorption properties to the heel. Regular ice treatment to reduce the inflammation is also successful, as well as a course of laser treatment.

Arch pain is caused by overuse of the muscles and tissue that run along the bottom of the foot. Over pronation is normally the cause, where the arch of the foot excessively rolls inwards leading to muscle over use. This condition can also be associated with heel pain as all the bones and muscles are connected to each other.

In the short term I would recommend ice treatment to reduce the inflammation of the area affected, followed by an over the counter insole that has an arch support built into it. I've also found that the more exercise you do the more important the warm up / cool down stretches are to prevent excessive strains in the muscles and tendons which will have a knock on effect in the

muscles of the feet. Again I've found laser treatment very helpful as it works directly on tissue repair

Blisters and corns are usually caused by friction. If your shoes fit OK, and you have the right support, and of course you look after your feet by giving them a lot of TLC, then it can only mean you have sensitive skin prone to blistering. Gel based products will prevent friction and relieve pressure. They are also perfect for easing the pain of corns, calluses and bunions whilst allowing you to continue your sporting activities.

If you have any concerns regarding your feet and your activities you should consult a podiatrist.