



# RIPEPI FOOT & ANKLE CLINICS

Alleviating Foot & Ankle Pain

News and Updates **July 2020**

## What Are Stress Fractures? (And How to Avoid Them)

### About the Doctor

Dr. Ripepi / Sports Podiatrist



Dr. Ripepi's goal is to treat patients with the most current and the most effective treatment options available, so that they can get back to the activities that they enjoy as soon as possible. Dr. Ripepi's philosophy is that people want to be on their feet, not off their feet, and this is how he approaches the treatment of their problem.

He enjoys treating patients of all ages, including children, active adults, and the elderly.

Dr. Ripepi is a native of the Cleveland area. He attended St. Ignatius High School, John Carroll University, and the Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine here in Cleveland. Dr. Ripepi completed his residency training in foot and ankle surgery in St. Louis, Missouri. He has been in solo practice for 27 years in Parma and Rocky River, Ohio.

As part of providing the best care for his patients, Dr. Ripepi is board certified by the American Board of Podiatric Surgery and a member of the American College of Foot & Ankle Surgeons. He is on staff at Fairview Hospital, UH Parma Medical Center, and Southwest Hospital.

Dr. Ripepi participates in an active lifestyle and understands that his patients want to return to their activity as quickly as possible. He enjoys basketball, running, and overall fitness. After playing basketball and football in high school he now enjoys coaching his four children in CYO basketball.

Dr. Ripepi is a member of:

- ABPS – American Board of Podiatric Surgery
- AAPSM – American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine
- ACFAS – American College of Foot & Ankle Surgeons

Getting out and starting a new activity can be a real thrill—which makes it all the more heartbreaking if you develop a painful condition and have to sit things out before you've had much of a chance to get into them.

Unfortunately, that's the calling card of many overuse injuries, and stress fractures are a particularly nasty-sounding example.

As opposed to the "standard" fracture you might envision, of a bone breaking into two or more pieces, stress fractures are hairline cracks that appear along the surface of a bone.

Instead of a stress fracture resulting from a sudden hit, it is much more likely to be the result of repetitive impacts over time, such as from running.

Whenever we work out, we are effectively breaking down our bodies on a cellular level. This is true as well for the bones in our feet as we make them repeatedly hit the pavement. We counter this by giving our bodies rest, allowing them time to rebuild themselves stronger and better able to endure these stresses. That's what exercise is all about!

However, if we do not allow enough rest and push our bodies longer or more intensely than they are prepared for, the breakdown can overwhelm the recovery. This can weaken bones to the point of developing painful stress fractures.

The keys to reducing your stress fracture risks are simple:

- Make sure you have supportive footwear made for your activity.
- Start a new activity at a low level of intensity, and gradually work your way higher at no more than a 10% increase per week.
- Make time for rest days and low-impact days.

If you would like further advice on how best to start new activities, please don't be afraid to ask!



# Ready Your Feet with Some Morning Stretches

There's nothing like waking up refreshed and ready to take on the day—unless you feel a sharp jolt of heel pain as soon as your feet hit the floor.

This symptom is often a sign of a problem that may need professional treatment, such as plantar fasciitis. We highly recommend letting us know if this sort of thing happens to you.

In the meantime, performing some stretches in the morning can help lessen that initial painful impact—plus it's good for you even if you don't have morning heel pain! Here are a couple easy morning exercises to try from the comfort of bed.

## Towel Stretch

- You will need a towel that you can use as a strap, but a belt or resistance band will also work perfectly fine.
- Sit in bed with one leg out in front of you. Loop the strap around the underside of your foot, along the ball of the foot and toes.
- Take an end of the strap in each hand and gently pull back, flexing the top of the foot back.
- Hold for 30-45 seconds, repeating up to three times with each foot.

## Toe Extension

- Sit with one leg crossed over the other. Grasp the toes of the crossed leg with one hand.
- Gently flex your toes back and flex your ankle upward as far as comfortably possible, feeling a stretch in the arch and your calf.
- Hold for 10 seconds, release, and repeat for 2-3 minutes per foot.

We can help you find additional stretches to meet your needs. Don't be afraid to ask!

# Mark Your Calendars

- July 1** National Postal Worker Day: Thank your reliable mail carrier!
- July 5** National Workaholics Day: But at least take a lunch break.
- July 9** Cow Appreciation Day: Hope they milk it for all it's worth.
- July 12** National Different Colored Eyes Day: Which two would you choose?
- July 18** National Caviar Day: ...Nah, we're not going to have any, either.
- July 20** National Moon Day: One small step for man...
- July 25** National Merry-Go-Round Day: Pick your favorite horse!
- July 31** National Avocado Day: Celebrate with some toast or guac!



# Give Your Immune System a Hand with These Tips

Every day we face a world full of organisms, and some are just not good for us. Thankfully, our bodies are equipped with immune systems to take out these invaders and keep us from becoming sick.

While we can't always beat everything, keeping our immune systems as healthy as possible can help reduce the frequency, length, and severity of illnesses. There is plenty you can do to give yourself a hand:

- **Eat immunity-boosting foods.** Eat foods rich in compounds that are highly suggested to benefit your immune system. This includes vitamin C, antioxidants, and allicin (found in garlic). The healthier options you can find for these, the better—so try to keep the sugar down and the nutritional value up.
- **Reduce your stress.** Persistent stress can weaken your body and its ability to fight disease. Taking some time to meditate or simply get away from anxieties when you feel stressed can be highly beneficial.
- **Exercise.** Not only is physical activity good for reducing stress, but it can greatly benefit your overall functioning as well. At least 10 minutes of cardio or strength training a day can be helpful, but going up to a half hour or more is even better.
- **Sleep well.** Another important tool in the anti-stress repertoire, treat sleep as a priority. Most people need 7-8 hours for optimal function and body recovery—and fighting off infections is part of that.

If you have challenges with stress, sleep, or fitness, consider speaking with your primary care physician. Getting some help can make a significant difference for your overall health.



## Summer Chicken Salad

A tasty, refreshing grilled complement to any cookout!

### Ingredients

- 3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Olive oil
- 4 ears fresh corn
- 3 Tbsp. minced fresh dill (plus more for serving)
- 3 celery stalks, finely diced
- 1 medium red onion, finely diced
- 1.5 c. blueberries
- ¾ c. crumbled feta
- ¼ c. half-and-half
- ¼ c. mayonnaise
- ¼ c. sour cream
- 1 tsp. sugar
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 head butter lettuce, leaves separated

### Preparation

- Place chicken breasts into a large plastic storage bag and pound with a mallet or rolling pin to a ¼-inch uniform thickness. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.
- Heat grill and drizzle with olive oil. Grill the chicken on both sides until done (~7 minutes per side). Set aside to cool.
- Grill corn for a few minutes, until still crunchy but colorful. Shave the kernels off each cob with a sharp knife. Combine with dill, celery, and onions in a large bowl. Set aside.
- For dressing, mix together feta, half-and-half, mayonnaise, and sour cream in a bowl. Stir in sugar, lemon juice, and some salt and pepper, to taste.
- Slice the chicken to create flat, randomly shaped pieces. Throw into bowl with the celery, onions, and corn. Stir to combine. Pour half of dressing over ingredients and gently toss until lightly coated. Add blueberries.
- Spoon salad into butter lettuce cups and sprinkle with extra feta and dill.





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# Fighting Friction in Your Feet

Friction is not entirely a bad thing. If there was no friction, we'd always be sliding all over the floor!

But having too much friction against areas of the feet can cause a variety of problems. Skin tries to protect itself against these forces in a few different ways—none of which are all that pleasant or comfortable:

- **Corns** are thick, hardened layers of skin that tend to be raised from the surface. They tend to show up on areas that don't directly bear weight, such as the tops and sides of your toes.
- **Calluses**, like corns, are thick and hardened layers of skin, but they tend to be flatter and wider. They tend to show up where weight is directly being carried on the feet, such as the soles and heels.
- **Blisters** are small pockets of fluid that develop between the upper layers of the skin.

All of these conditions are natural attempts by the body to protect itself against forms of friction (although blisters can also be a response to burns or freezing as well). In order to properly address these problems, you need to address their causes.

In many cases, footwear is to blame. Ensure your shoes fit well and not rubbing against problem areas.

In other cases, the structure of your feet themselves may lead to excess pressure in certain areas. Deformities such as hammertoes or bunions often create prime locations for rubbing against the insides of shoes—although you don't have to have an obvious deformity for foot structure to be a contributing factor. We can help you determine the best types of footwear and protections, and potentially provide custom orthotics to shift weight away from "hot spots."

If corns, calluses, or blisters are a persistent problem for you, let us know. We can help!

