



DR. SCOTT O'CONNOR

Fellow, American College of Foot & Ankle Surgery
Diplomate, American Board of Podiatric Surgeons
Certified in Foot, Reconstructive Rearfoot/Ankle Surgery

Simple Precautions Can Keep You on the Trails This Fall



Even the most avid outdoorsmen don't realize just how much stress and strain they put on their feet and ankles during autumn hikes. Those long, vigorous walks on uneven terrain may be fun, but without proper care, they could lead to damage to their feet and ankles.

Poor choice in footwear and lack of conditioning can lead to foot and ankle injuries that will keep you from participating in the sports you love. Follow these precautions and you can enjoy all the season has to offer.

Wear the Right Shoes and Socks

You don't wear hiking boots to play basketball, so practice the same common sense in return. Hikers should wear top-quality, well insulated, moisture-proof hiking boots with steel or graphite shanks. These boots offer ankle support and reduce muscle and tendon fatigue and injury risk.

Proper socks can also mean the difference between comfortable walks and those resulting in blisters, fungal infections and even frostbite. To prevent these problems, always wear two layers of socks:

Layer 1 – Synthetic socks to keep your feet dry and reduce blister-causing friction.

Layer 2 – Wool socks to add warmth, absorb moisture away from your skin and make the hiking boot more comfortable.

Start Slow

"No pain, no gain" does not apply to your feet and ankles, so play it smart and ease into your outdoor adventures. Start with less difficult terrain or shorter walks. Poor physical conditioning is the leading cause of injuries, so stretching exercises and building up of foot and ankle muscles can prevent these problems.

Don't do more than your body can take—an injury on your first time out could mean your last time out for the season!

Listen to Your Body

Pain is the body's way of telling you there is something wrong. If your feet or ankles start to hurt, take a break. Pushing yourself to "hike on" through even minor pain can lead to more serious injuries.

If you injure your feet or ankles when out on a hike, contact a foot and ankle surgeon right away. Early treatment can get you back on the trails in no time.

Normal
2200 Ft. Jesse, Ste 250
(309) 807-0384

Pontiac
1512 W. Reynolds, Ste. A
(815) 842-6551

Eureka
105 S. Major
(309) 467-2371

www.centralillinoisfootandankle.com