

## FOOT CARE for hikers

It goes without saying that hiking puts a lot of stress on your feet. Here are some tips on minimizing the damage.

**Most blister and chaffing problems result from hikers ignoring the warning signs and just soldiering on.**

### Toenails:

Trim toenails and fingernails before hiking, and round off the corners of your nails.

### Boots or Trail Runners:

Buy footwear that is heavy enough to provide solid support for your feet.

Buy footwear that fits. Not so loose that your heel lifts when walking, but not so tight that your toes are cramped.

If your boots fit properly, you should be able to fit a finger behind your heel, when you cram your toes to the front of your boot.

Also, some boots are wider than others. A boot that is too wide or narrow will never feel right.

Try on several types and sizes of boot, then take the best pair home and wear them around the house until you are sure they are the ones for you.

Once you have chosen your footwear, give them a couple of coats of silicon waterproofing spray.

Don't take new boots on a long hike. Break them in on several short hikes first.

### Water + Camp Shoes:

**NOT CROCS or FLIP FLOPS!**

These are usually a type of sandal with a good strap at the back....preferably with a closed toe.

They are very useful both for walking in water, and as camp shoes that allow time for your feet and boots to dry.

### Talcum Powder:

Apply twice a day if possible.

This acts as a lubricant, so rub some on your feet before putting your socks on, and then sprinkle a bit inside your boots.

To prevent chafing, it's also a good idea to apply talcum to the other end of your legs, where they join your body.

### **Socks:**

Buy good wool socks. There are lighter ones available for summer hiking.

You should take 2 pair of wool socks for hiking plus another pair of socks for camp use.

If stopping for a lunch break halfway through the day, remove your boots and socks to allow them to air out a bit, then apply more talcum as mentioned above.

At camp you should change to lighter camp socks and sandals, and allow your boots to air out.

Wash out your wool socks with plain water, inside and out and let them dry.

### **Foot First Aid:**

The first sign of a blister or chafing is often the feeling of a hot spot. Don't ignore it!

Remove you sock, wipe down the tender area with an alcohol pad and apply some Leukotape.

Lance a blister in a couple of spots with a sterilized needle, apply some alcohol, then some moleskin, then some leukotape.

If the skin is gone from an area of your foot, such as the heel, apply some gauze, then leukotape.

