

Is Spring the Right Time to get Bunion Surgery?

Spring has sprung! The weather is getting warmer, the clothes are getting lighter, and the shoes are becoming...well...lesser. Here in Houston, TX, sandal season comes early as our spring quickly evolves into our hot, humid summertime.

When the patients in my Houston podiatry practice come in during this time of year, they are more aware of their bunions, hammertoes and other bumps that have been hidden in shoes all winter. They don't like them, they don't look nice, and they want them gone...NOW! So practically speaking, is springtime the best time to have bunion surgery?



A bunion is when the first metatarsal bone rotates to cause a painful bump on the side of the foot, just below the big toe. It often aches when you walk and makes it difficult to wear shoes because of the pressure. Commonly, if you have a bunion, a parent or grandparent likely has or had one too. Bunions can only be "removed" with surgery. That surgery usually involves the metatarsal bone being surgically fractured and repositioned. The bone is secured with a tiny screw.

Recovery after bunion surgery is somewhat involved. It requires a period of time without walking and then walking with the assistance of crutches. Stitches stay in for 2-3 weeks and it takes 6-8 weeks for the bone to be completely healed. So...will your feet look good in sandals?

Bunion surgery is very effective for correcting the appearance of the feet and many feel little discomfort after surgery. Best results come with great compliance from my patient to help to minimize swelling. So let's put it this way. If you had surgery in April, you'd probably be ready to wear those strappy sandals after about 2 months...still most of the summer left to enjoy.

A few caveats...first of all, I personally don't recommend surgery when there is a bunion without pain. The foot is too important to bear weight and function to play with the structure. There's no such thing as cosmetic surgery of the foot. Furthermore, everyone is different and procedures vary, so visit the office to see what your surgery and recovery would look like. Happy shoe shopping!

Beat Warm-Weather Shoes Blues

April is often when things start heating up in Houston, and with warmer weather come some particular foot headaches. Want happy feet this spring? Read on for our pro-tips:

1. Blisters: Sweaty feet and lots of non-leather shoes can add up to major shoe rubbing—and blisters! To avoid, apply stick deodorant to danger spots like the backs of your heels and the outsides of your big toes, before putting on your shoes. The deodorant will act as a barrier against friction.

2. Stinky Shoes: Sweaty feet not only cause blisters, they also smell! If you want to avoid this pitfall of summer, spraying a bit of dry shampoo in your shoes before wearing them will help soak up some of the odor-causing moisture from your feet. What it won't do, however, is kill bacteria, so if athlete's foot is a concern for you (and it should be) you may want to invest in an anti-fungal spray for your shoes as well.

3. Too-Tight Sandal Straps: Thong and sandal straps have a tendency to cut into skin when not well-fitted—here's an awesome hack that battles this problem: fill a plastic bag with water, seal it, and pop it into your shoes. Leave them in the freezer over night, and voilà! Your shoes have been stretched. Of course, once you stretch your shoes, you can't "un-stretch" them, so make sure it really needs doing before you try this plan out.

4. Slippery Sandals: Flip-flops and other pool shoes have almost no traction (yet another reason why they should never be long-term footwear) so slipping beside the pool while wearing them is a very real risk. To help avoid this pitfall, rub the soles of your new shoes lightly with sandpaper or, even easier, score the soles in an X pattern with a pair of scissors.

3 Ways to Work Meditation into A Busy Day

1) Download

There are so many great meditation apps these days. Whether you're stuck in traffic or working late, you can find a few minutes to whip out your phone and work on an app guided period anywhere from a minimum of five minutes to whatever time you have available.

2) Check Your Body

Body scanning is something that can be done anywhere and in any position. Start from the top of your head and work your way to your feet, slowly observing how every part of how your body feels.

3) Make a Mantra

Mantra meditation involves repeating a calming word or phrase. While you can technically do this anywhere, it's best to sit in a dark room be in a cross-legged sitting position for this exercise. Let your breath go as it pleases before and after you repeat your mantra.

Perfect Spring Dinner Ideas

With winter in our rear view mirror, it's time to start eating lighter! Try out this great, healthy pizza recipe and be sure to follow our blog for weekly recipe suggestions on What to Eat Wednesdays!

Pizz'alad

Ingredients

- 2/3 cup lukewarm water
- 1 teaspoon instant or RapidRise yeast
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 1/4 cups bread flour or all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup white whole-wheat flour (see Tip) or all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 4 slices prosciutto, cut into strips
- 2 tablespoons sherry vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon anchovy paste or 1/2 teaspoon minced anchovy fillet
- 4 cups thinly sliced bitter greens, such as radicchio and/or escarole
- 1/3 cup shredded Asiago cheese

Directions

1. To prepare pizza dough: Stir water, yeast and sugar in a large bowl; let stand until the yeast has dissolved, about 5 minutes. Stir in bread flour (or all-purpose flour), whole-wheat flour (or all-purpose flour) and salt until the dough begins to come together.
 2. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface. Knead until smooth and elastic, about 10 minutes. (Alternatively, mix the dough in a food processor. Process until it forms a ball, then process for 1 minute to knead.) Place the dough in an oiled bowl and turn to coat.
 3. Cover the bowl with a clean kitchen towel; set aside in a warm, draft-free place until the dough has nearly doubled in size, about 1 hour.
 4. To bake pizza and prepare topping and salad: Position rack in lower third of oven, place a pizza stone on the rack and preheat oven to 500°F. Let the stone heat at 500° for 20 minutes. Want to grill your pizza instead? See Tips below.
 5. Roll pizza dough on a lightly floured surface into a 12- to 14-inch circle (depending on the size of your stone). Transfer to a lightly floured pizza peel (or inverted baking sheet).
 6. Combine garlic and 1 tablespoon oil in a small bowl and brush the dough with it. Sprinkle with prosciutto. Slide the pizza onto the hot stone. Bake until golden and crispy, 8 to 10 minutes.
 7. Meanwhile, whisk vinegar, anchovy and the remaining 2 tablespoons oil in a large bowl. Add greens and Asiago; toss to coat.
 8. When the pizza is done, transfer to a large cutting board and let cool for 5 minutes. Mound the salad in the middle and serve immediately.
- Tips: Try using white whole-wheat flour in place of all-purpose flour. It's made from a white variety of wheat, light in color and flavor but with the same nutritional properties as regular whole-wheat flour.



How You Can Raise Alcohol Awareness

April has been designated as Alcohol Awareness month by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, because drinking too much alcohol increases people's risk of injuries, violence, drowning, liver disease, and some types of cancer. We suggest observing the month by helping loved ones reduce their dependency on external substances!



How can you make a difference during Alcohol Awareness Month?

Here are three ways to get started!

- Encourage friends or family members to make small changes, like keeping track of their drinking and setting drinking limits.
- Talk about the effect your friend's drinking has on whatever he or she cares about most: career, children, sports, etc. Your friend may not be concerned about his or her own situation but may care deeply for the children and what the problem may be doing to them.

Be specific when you talk. Bring up incidents such as "When you cancelled our plans the other day" instead of "You never keep your word." And use "I" phrases, such as "I noticed" or "I'm worried," since your friend can't argue with your feelings.



The Disappearing Podiatrist

If you've seen Dr. Schneider recently, you may have thought "where's the rest of him?" Well, you're eyes are not deceiving you, over the last year, Dr. Schneider has lost about 70 lbs! Just before that time, he received some unpleasant and unhealthy numbers from his last physical. He knew a change had to be made for the sake of his family.

How did he do it? No fad diet here! Dr. Schneider joined Weight Watchers. He liked this program because of its overall flexibility and focus on overall health and not just losing weight. He stuck to the program and it was the right one for him. He was just declared a lifetime member after reaching his goal.

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March Answers:

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From the desk of Dr. Andrew Schneider:

Thank you for taking the time to read our February 2018 newsletter. Our goal is to keep you informed and entertained each month. Please feel free to pass this newsletter along to a friend or loved one who you think may benefit from this information.



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