



THE BAREFOOT BOOK

50 Great Reasons to Kick Off Your Shoes

L. Daniel Howell, PhD

This book explains:

1. The anatomy of the foot and shoe
2. How wearing shoes leads to injuries
3. How going barefoot heals your body
4. How just about anyone can embrace a barefoot lifestyle

There Is No Such Thing As A Sensible Shoe

(Alameda, CA—May 2010) Americans are chronic shoe-wearers. We buy shoes for infants who can't yet walk. We wear shoes almost constantly, certainly in public spaces, and often within the familiar walls of our own homes. We're obsessed with shoes. If we want to, we can purchase shoes for just about any occasion or purpose imaginable, in any color, style and at any price. So what's wrong with that?

The Barefoot Book explores this question and provides a surprising answer. What's wrong is that chronic shoe wearing is negatively affecting our health. All of us have experienced pain and blisters caused by wearing ill-fitting shoes. Sometimes these injuries occur in only a matter of minutes. The long-term consequences of chronic shoe wearing, whether they fit perfectly, or not, are more difficult to connect but abundant nonetheless.

According to author L. Daniel Howell, the warm, moist environment of a shoe-clad foot result in the perfect environment for fungus and bacteria to grow. Poorly fitted shoes cause or exacerbate a host of foot issues from hammer-toes, bunions and ingrown toe-nails to fallen arches and Hallux valgus (the deformity caused by severe bunions). High heeled shoes are the worst culprits of all, with chronic use damaging the knees, spine and posture. Shoes redistribute weight, alter joints, weaken foot muscles, decrease foot flexibility, and actually eliminate sensory feedback from the sole and shock absorption of the arch. This leaves feet weak, fragile, and even more dependent on shoes. The simple fact is that

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the continuous wearing of shoes, any shoes, is both a major and underreported health concern.

The solution is obvious: take them off and let your feet breathe. Ease into going barefoot by easing out of shoes while sitting at your desk. Walk the dog while barefoot. Spend on entire weekend without shoes. Or even declare the house a barefoot-only zone.

To some, the barefoot lifestyle is initially startling, but it's a lifestyle that increasingly makes sense in the context of foot health and culture. While Americans are attached to shoes, cores of other cultures successfully and comfortably go barefoot. The fact is that people who go barefoot suffer from a mere fraction of the foot, leg and back ailments that afflict citizens of the United States.

To help readers on the journey to a barefoot lifestyle, Howell dispels some of the myths about going shoeless. Readers can rest assured that the Department of Health does not require shoes in public places, it's not illegal to drive barefoot, and in most circumstances, going barefoot is not dangerous.

Of course, we can't always go barefoot, so Howell describes the best and healthiest kinds of shoes to wear for the times we simply must wear them. He provides tips for getting started on going shoeless, describes the best conditions and situations for going barefoot, identifies the risks, and even suggests ways to explain to people why you're going barefoot – particularly if you venture into public areas where shoes are expected.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Daniel Howell, PhD, has a doctoral degree in biochemistry and teaches courses on human anatomy and physiology at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. An avid barefoot runner, Howell leads a barefoot hiking group and has personally logged over 2000 shoeless miles.

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