



Think Twice Before the Flip-Flops Go On



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aspects of the feet can obviously cause infection and the need for a more urgent trip to the operating room. The concern with nonmetallic objects is that it can be very difficult to identify where these objects are situated in the foot. They are not visible on regular X-rays and it can become a very difficult process to find "a needle in a haystack" in surgery. Moral of the story?... wear shoes as much as possible, whether sandals or even flip-flops. This small protective barrier can make all the difference in the world in protecting the foot from foreign bodies.

Lawnmower injuries are also a major source for foot and ankle trauma in the summertime. It may seem obvious to wear protective shoe gear while mowing your lawn but the task of mowing yearlong becomes so repetitive that we become complacent. The classic injury is when a push mower runs over open toes because it was utilized

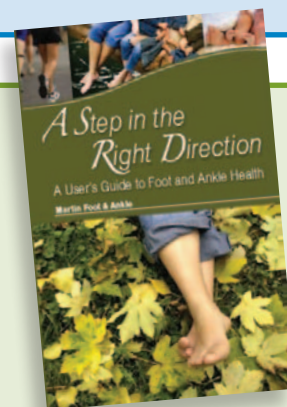
on an incline. Or the scenario where a slip on wet grass causes the foot to slip underneath the mower deck while going downhill. This creates a situation for open fracture management. A loss of soft tissue surrounding fractures is a more emergent scenario that requires a trip to the operating room to fix fractures and debride the foot of any debris that may be caught in the soft tissues. Often these injuries will require amputation because of the massive tissue loss. The need for steel-tipped or composite-toed shoes is not absolutely critical for mowing the lawn, but the usage of a work boot, not a sneaker, is imperative to prevent these injuries from wreaking havoc on your foot.

Not only are soft-tissue injuries an issue when improper shoe gear is utilized in the summer, but musculoskeletal issues can also occur when flip-flops are broken out. Obviously flip-flops are not the most supportive shoe

gear that we wear. Although some types have come a long way with the amount of arch support, the average person does not wear a flip-flop supportive enough for the activities that they are participating in. This leads to overuse injuries such as tendinitis, plantar fasciitis and other ailments to the feet and ankles caused by non-supportive shoe gear. Whether it be a pickup game of volleyball in the backyard or a stroll down the boardwalk, these incidental activities can be all it takes to stir up a good case of tendinitis. Foot type is obviously a big player in whether you will see these issues occurring in the feet, but your best defense can be just wearing flip-flops with a bigger arch and a little bit more heel height to prevent the strain to these soft-tissue structures.

Michael B. Younes, DPM, FACFAS, ATC, is board qualified by the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons. Dr. Younes received his Bachelor of Science in athletic training from the University of Delaware. His experience as an athletic trainer gave him an appreciation for the complexity of foot and ankle injuries. This led him to Temple University, where he received his Doctor of Podiatric Medicine in 2000. Dr. Younes' surgical training at a level II trauma center provided him with focuses on foot and ankle trauma, diabetic foot reconstructions and podiatric sports medicine. He enhanced his sports medicine experiences while working with team physicians and athletes from the Philadelphia 76ers, Wings, Eagles and the U.S. Women's Soccer Team.

Dr. Younes enjoys mountain biking, camping, jet-skiing and fishing.



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