



STONE



The Wicked Itch

Four home remedies for treating athlete's foot

It's never a pretty sight. First, your feet begin to itch, then you notice dry skin, blisters, and cracked skin between your toes. That's when you know you have it—a full-blown case of athlete's foot.

Known in the medical world as *tinea pedis*, athlete's foot is a fungal infection of the skin that develops in a moist, dark, warm environment. And since our feet have more than 250,000 sweat glands, they become the perfect breeding ground for this nasty ailment. The good news: You can ease this itch quickly.

Below are four inexpensive home remedies to help you do so. Before attempting any of them, make sure your diagnosis is indeed athlete's foot. And if you have swelling in your feet or legs, consult your podiatrist.

Soothe 'em. To lessen itching and dry sores, dissolve one packet of Domeboro powder or 2 tablespoons of Burow's Solution in 1 pint of cold water. Soak a clean, untreated, white cotton cloth in the liquid, and apply to your feet three or four times a day for 15 to 20 minutes.

Salt 'em. Mix 2 teaspoons of salt per pint of warm water, and soak your feet for 5 to 10 minutes several times a day. This will reduce excessive perspiration and soften the affected skin.

Oil 'em. Use an over-the-counter, tea-tree oil along with baking soda, suggests sports podiatrist Rick Braver, D.P.M. Apply a light layer of tea-tree oil to your feet first, and massage it in well. Then sprinkle baking soda onto the feet. "Be sure to rub the oil between your toes," he says.

Wine 'em. Mix 1 ounce of sage and 1 ounce of agrimony (an herb) into 2 cups of white wine. Simmer the mixture in a covered saucepan for 20 minutes. Once it cools, soak your feet in it several times a day.

Happy Feet

To protect yourself from athlete's foot, remember this:

- Wear flip-flops in the gym or locker room.
- Change your socks twice a day.
- Don't wear damp socks or shoes.
- Apply antiperspirant to sweaty feet.
- Wear shoes that let your feet breathe.
- Sprinkle baking soda or foot powder in your shoes.

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Dr. Richard T. Braver
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140 Grand Avenue Englewood, NJ 07631 (201) 569-7672
 4-14 Saddle River Road Suite 107 Millburn, NJ 07041 (201) 791-1881
 51 Route 23 South Bergen, NJ 07001 (973) 831-1774

Please forward all correspondence to the Englewood Address
 E-mail: DrRun@aol.com WEBSITE: WWW.DRRUN.COM