



SONORAN
FOOT & ANKLE INSTITUTE

News and Updates

January 2025



About the Doctor



Joseph Baker, DPM, FACFAS

Originally from Michigan, Dr. Baker has enjoyed calling Tucson his home since 2016. He has been in practice since then, helping to treat a wide range of patients of different ages and stages of life. His professional interests include the treatment of ankle arthritis, and instability, complex foot and ankle pathology, and sports medicine. He has advanced training in foot and ankle reconstruction, arthroscopic techniques, ankle replacement, and bunion correction. Outside of work, he enjoys spending time with his family and staying active.

Locations

Rosemont
Oro Valley

Wishing Your Feet and Ankles a Great 2025!

Common New Year's resolutions include losing weight, kicking a bad habit, or taking up a new hobby. All worthy goals, but don't gloss over taking better care of your feet and ankles. People tend to take them for granted when all is well.

Limit the time you spend in flip-flops and high heels, which are not feet-friendly. Flip-flops for a quick jaunt across hot asphalt or beach sand is one thing; wearing them for hours at a time is another. Same for high heels. Save them for special occasions only, and they don't need to be the highest of high heels.

Buy new athletic shoes after 300–500 miles of walking or running or every 45–60 hours of activities such as tennis or basketball. Proper support and cushioning for your feet are vital.

Wear shoes that match your activity. Court sports, field sports, running, and walking all place different demands on feet and ankles. There is no one-shoe-fits-all variety.

When taking on a new workout activity or ramping up an existing one, do it gradually. Overdoing it can lead to plantar fasciitis and shin splints, among other ailments.

If you're feeling foot or ankle pain, don't attempt to "power through" workouts or other activities. Dealing with a serious injury is right around the corner.

Persistent foot or ankle pain should prompt an appointment with our office. We will pinpoint its cause and provide effective treatment. The longer you let a condition go, the worse it will get and the more involved the eventual treatment. We want your 2025 to be as healthy and pain-free as possible!



Winter and Young Whippersnappers' Feet

When your child spends time outdoors in winter weather — snow is especially tough to resist! — cold, dry air and moisture sometimes spoil the fun. Keep your child's feet safe and healthy.

Start with good-quality, waterproof boots with ample tread. Tumbles caused by slippery conditions inflict many foot and ankle injuries. A roomy toe box is important — kids should be able to wiggle their toes even while wearing thicker socks. If toes are crammed, they can bend unnaturally, affecting posture and springboarding issues elsewhere in the body. Many foot and ankle problems suffered by adults can be traced back to their childhoods.

As for socks, avoid cotton. They're not efficient at keeping out cold or wicking moisture. Wool (especially merino wool) is a superior option. Monitor your children's socks if they've been outside for a while. Sweat moisture combined with cold temperatures isn't a friendly environment for feet. In extreme circumstances, frostbite can be a threat. Once your child comes inside, towel off their feet right away, then inspect their feet for blisters, redness, other discoloration, etc.

Keep an eye out for dry, cracked skin, too, which can be painful. The lower humidity of winter is the main culprit. Moisturize your child's feet, and make sure your child is properly hydrated. Foods containing vitamins A and E help nourish the skin.

If your child walks to school and wears a double layer of socks, keep in mind that while in school, their feet may sweat and the double layer can interfere with evaporation. This can lead to irritated, chapped, or cracked skin.

If winter conditions are putting a damper on your child's foot and ankle health, an appointment with our office will lift their spirit.

Mark Your Calendars

- Jan. 1** New Year's Day: "Auld lang syne" means "times long past."
- Jan. 5** Whipped Cream Day: Cream only whips at temperatures below 50°. Above that, say hello to butter.
- Jan. 12** Hot Tea Day: All "true" teas come from the same plant: *Camellia sinensis*. How tea is processed determines its different flavors.
- Jan. 17** Kid Inventors Day: In 1877, Chester Greenwood (age 15) combated cold ears while ice skating. A wire frame, pieces of beaver skin, grandma's help — earmuffs!
- Jan. 20** Martin Luther King Jr. Day: Singer Mahalia Jackson convinced King to include the "I have a dream" part of his famous Washington, D.C., speech.
- Jan. 23** Pie Day: Pies originated over 11,000 years ago; fruit pies only arrived in the 1500s. Better late than never.
- Jan. 29** Red Carnation Day: Carnations are an ingredient of yellow and green French Chartreuse liqueurs.



Eyes Need Winter Protection Too

Many people associate sunglasses with warm weather; however, the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays never rest and can actually pack a bigger wallop over the winter. Your eyes are bombarded with nearly double the dose of UV rays when sunlight reflects off snow and ice. And then there's the glare. (The same is true with large bodies of water.)

That's why wearing sunglasses with at least 99% protection from ultraviolet rays (UVA and UVB) is so important. Excessive exposure to intense UV light can lead to cataracts and macular degeneration in the long term, and snow blindness (photokeratitis) in the short term, a temporary but painful condition in which the cornea is sunburned. Ouch!

It's important to note that even with thick cloud cover, at least a third of UV light gets through. Wearing sunglasses is beneficial on even the grayest winter day. In addition, UV light is more intense at higher elevations than at sea level. For every 1,000 feet in elevation, it's estimated that UV exposure is 6%–10% higher. The reason? Sunlight doesn't go through as much filtering by the earth's atmosphere at higher elevations. It runs more of a gauntlet on its way down to sea level.

Sunglasses, especially wraparounds, also help guard against flying debris, allergens, and blustery winter winds, which can cause teary eyes and quickly dry them out. Also, sunglasses can help reduce eye-strain and headaches — pupils constrict when there is excessive light but can only become so small, so constant squinting results in those unpleasant aftereffects.

Sunglasses are year-round knights in shining armor ... while toning down the "shining" part, of course.



Mediterranean Cabbage Salad

Prep time: 15 min.

When it comes to cabbage, sauerkraut hogs the January spotlight. But that's not the only cabbage dish in town. Here's a sour, sweet, spicy, crunchy salad that you can keep in the fridge for 3 to 5 days. It's one of the best Mediterranean chopped cabbage salads you will taste.

Ingredients

- 1 medium cabbage, finely chopped
- 3 carrots, shredded
- 1 yellow bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1 orange bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, finely chopped
- Celery to taste, finely chopped
- 8 Kalamata olives, chopped
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup white wine vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Olive oil to taste

Directions

1. Place all chopped vegetables in a food container, and season with salt and pepper according to taste. Pour in the white wine vinegar. Stir well.
2. Before serving, strain well the quantity you want, and add olive oil. Put the rest in the fridge.
3. Can be stored in the fridge for 3 to 5 days.

NOTES:

1. If you'd like, add red cabbage, garlic, parsley, arugula, radish, chili peppers, and/or capers.
2. Don't add balsamic vinegar; it will change the beautiful colors of the salad into a kind of black, unappetizing mass.

Recipe courtesy of 30daysofgreekfood.com.



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WISHING
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SEE PAGE 1

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When Cold-to-Warm Wreaks Havoc



Chilblains are red/blue/purple, itchy, swollen, burning, painful patches of skin that frequently strike the toes, heels, fingers, nose, and/or earlobes upon quick temperature shifts from cold to warm. The risk is even greater if someone sits too close to an active heat source or immediately hops into a hot shower after having been outside in the wintry cold.

Cold temperatures cause a narrowing of blood vessels. Then when skin is exposed to sudden warmth, blood vessels widen quickly, which can, for some people, open the door to blood leaking into surrounding tissue. Hence the painful hullabaloo.

Many people never develop chilblains. It's frequently a function of a person's circulatory efficiency. People with circulatory-related problems, including diabetes, or certain other health conditions (e.g., anemia) are much more likely to experience chilblains. Damp or drafty conditions, diet, hormonal imbalance, and outdoor occupations are contributing factors too.

In extreme cases, chilblains can lead to blisters and cause the skin to break down, resulting in ulceration and potential infection. Those with diabetes should always and promptly give us a call to schedule an assessment.

It's important not to scratch chilblains. Apply soothing lotions such as calamine or witch hazel to reduce discomfort. For nondiabetics, if the skin has broken, use an antibacterial ointment or spray and a bandage. Stay alert to signs of infection.

For those most susceptible to chilblains, dress your whole body for warmth when outdoors and stay active. Chilblains typically clear out within a couple of weeks. If yours are causing you concern, ease your anxiety by putting our skill and expertise to work for you.