

the Ultimate Exercises for

stylish feet

4 Ways To Stretch & Strengthen Your Tired Toes

The latest footwear fashions often have us slipping into styles that cause our feet discomfort and, at the end of a long day, have our feet wishing we weren't so fashionable. In fact, a recent survey conducted by the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) found that sixty-one

percent (61%) of women ages 18-49 spend more than four hours on their feet daily. Luckily, there are exercises that can target our feet and alleviate the pain caused by hours of wearing stylish shoes. Think of it as yoga for the soles.

1 Nothing spells relief like a good old-fashion stretch. Weight-bearing stretches reduce the pain caused by arch pain and hammertoes and can also simply be used to improve overall foot strength. While standing, place toes against the wall, leaning slightly forward until the arch starts to stretch. To treat plantar fasciitis (heel pain), try a non-weight-bearing stretch by sitting with one leg stretched out in front of you and placing a gym towel around the ball of the foot, softly pulling back the towel ends until the foot begins to stretch.

The steep pitch of a pump or the narrow width of a flat can often contribute to hammertoes and toe cramps. To strengthen feet and alleviate distress, place corks or foam toe separators between toes and squeeze for five seconds; repeating ten times. Next, place a thick rubber band around all five toes and stretch the band as wide as possible, holding for five seconds and repeating on each foot ten times.

Get an instant massage by placing a golf ball under the ball of your foot and rolling it back and forth with light pressure. This exercise is perfect for treating plantar fasciitis (heel pain), cramps or arch pain. If a golf ball is not readily available, any type of small ball will do the trick.

To alleviate toe cramps (which may be caused by ill-fitting shoes) and strengthen calf muscles (which will help make legs look great in a pair of heels), do heel raises, toe points and toe flexes. For heel raises, start by standing upright, raising yourself up to the balls of your feet and holding for at least five seconds. Repeat ten times. For toe points and flexes, start in the same position, lift one foot and roll it forward until the toes are pointing downward toward the ground. Then, flex your foot upwards. Hold each position for the same amount of time and complete the same number of repetitions.

