



# TIPS FOR SAFE PEDICURES

SEARCH

## KEEP YOUR TOES LOOKING AND FEELING GOOD

Whether you're doing your own pedicure or having it done in a salon, you should take proper precautions. To ensure a safe and effective pedicure, the American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society suggests the following:

- Soak your feet in warm soapy water for approximately 10 minutes. This helps soften and clean skin and nails.
- After the foot soaking, gently remove calluses with a pumice stone, Hindu stone, or emery board. This gets rid of dead skin cells as well as calluses. Some body scrub products can help exfoliate dead skin between pedicures. Many pedicurists will cut or shave calluses with razors. However, it is not legal, safe, or recommended for an unlicensed practitioner to cut the skin.
- Push back the cuticles with an orange stick or a Hindu stone. A normal part of the nail, cuticles offer protection from bacteria and infection. Cuticles clearly overhanging the nail margins should be trimmed carefully. Any trimming which goes further than the nail margin or draws blood is unsafe.
- Trim toenails straight across rather than in a curved pattern. This helps prevent **ingrown toenails**, allowing the straight edge of the nail to advance as one unit. Cutting the toenails in a curved pattern allows the recessed edges to grow into the skin. The pedicurist should take care not to trim the nails too short since this also can

promote ingrown toenails. The toenails should be trimmed just enough so that you can see a few millimeters of skin just beyond the nail margin. Nails should not overhang the edge of the toe.

- Refine the nail edge with an emery board, maintaining the straight edge.
- Apply cream and moisturizing lotion to the skin and nail margins. You can find several creams and foot masks on the market specially formulated for the feet.
- Massage the cream or lotion into the feet. A foot massage can help relieve tension and tired, aching feet. You can get a good massage at home by rolling your feet back and forth over a rolling pin. Reflexologists believe that points on the foot correspond to other body parts and ailments can be relieved through reflexology. They believe the ball of the foot has a connection to the lungs, the heel to the lower back, and the great toe to the head. Although no scientific research exists to back up these claims, reflexology does seem to produce positive results in some people. People with significant medical problems should consult with a medical doctor.
- Apply nail polish remover to the nails to gently remove excess lotion. This allows nail polish to adhere better to the nail. A pedicurist usually will apply polish as a base coat, then one or two coats of color, and finally a clear topcoat.
- Space your pedicures apart by approximately eight weeks.

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American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society®  
Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Foundation  
[9400 W. Higgins Road, Suite 220](#)  
[Rosemont, IL 60018](#)

800-235-4855 or +1-847-698-4654 (outside US)

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