

How to prevent blisters and keep you on the court for longer!



Running around, stopping and starting on a hard surface court can take its toll on your feet, especially when it's raining and your feet can get wet. Here you will find a few tips that will help you along the way to prevent blisters from stopping you in your tracks, on the court.

How to prevent a blister:

Firstly, it is important to understand that blisters occur as a result of increased friction between the shoe and pressure points on your feet. There are three conditions inside your shoes that will cause blisters: moisture, heat and debris:

- Choose a shoe that has a semi-flexible sole, not entirely rigid and not entirely soft - this will reduce the forces of friction that are generated between the shoes and the ground when they contact
- Make sure that your shoes are the correct size, a snug fit but enough room for your foot to slide forward ever so slightly when running and stopping on the court - approximately one thumb of space at the front of the shoes is considered appropriate. It is a great idea to go to a specialist shoe store and get fitted by a trained staff member, who can measure your foot
- Make sure that you break in your shoes prior to starting a game. Wear them around on the weekend, to the shops or just for a walk
- If you are wearing orthotics in your shoes - covers such as spenkos are ideal as a cover on top of your orthotics. You can communicate this with your Podiatrist who will help arrange this for you
- If you suffer from corns and callouses, ensure you visit your Podiatrist a couple of times a season to make sure that these areas of hard skin are removed as they can lead to further blistering
- Make sure your socks are nice and snug, do not wear loose socks.
- A technical sock made of synthetic fibre material and padding underneath the heel and forefeet is more ideal

Things to do if you do get a blister:

Despite doing everything possible, you may still develop a blister and this is considered normal. They can hurt so if you do get one, following some of the following steps will reduce the pain and speed up the recovery process:

- If you need to burst the blister to reduce the pain, a visit to the Podiatrist is the most ideal way to make sure this is done in a sterile and clean manner however should you need to do this at home - never burst the blister by pushing on it, use a sterile needle to carefully puncture the blister at the edges in a few spots and then gently push the fluid out. You may need to do this a few times at hourly intervals, for larger blisters
- Once you have drained a blister - cover it with clean gauze or a bandage with a little compression
- Once the blister has dried out in a few hours - you can apply anti-septic agents such as betadine however they will sting on a fresh open wound. Always re-cover the area with a fresh clean dressing or bandage.
- To take the pressure off the blister, doughnut pads made of felt are the most ideal way to encourage healing of the area. Your Podiatrist can make these for you.
- Once your blister is no longer tender - use tea tree oil and a urea based heel balm, to restore the skin back to good health again