



CORNS AND CALLUSES

What are corns and calluses?

Corns and calluses are areas of tough, thickened skin caused by friction or pressure over a bony prominence. Calluses usually appear on the palms, fingertips, or soles of the feet. Corns are smaller and form on the toes.

How do they occur?

Corns and calluses on the feet can be caused by:

- New, tight, or poorly fitting shoes
- Sandals or shoes worn without socks, which leads to friction
- High-heeled shoes
- High arches in your feet that put pressure on the tips of the toes when you walk
- Any physical deformity that distributes your weight unevenly when you walk
- Protruding bones or not enough flesh to cushion the bones of your feet.

Calluses are often associated with certain types of work and sports. Tennis and baseball players develop calluses on their hands, manual laborers on their hands, joggers on the soles of their feet, and violinists and guitarists on their fingertips. For some activities it may be good to have calluses because they help keep you from getting blisters.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of corns and calluses include:

- A hard, tough area of thickened skin
- Tenderness or pain under the skin.

How can I treat myself?

The first step in the treatment of corns is to change to properly fitted footgear, which will allow adequate space for the painful areas.

The second step is to soften the corn so that it can be easily removed. Here's how to do that:

- Cut out a piece of 40% salicylic acid plaster slightly larger than the thickened area and apply it to the skin, sticky side down. Then apply a felt pad or corn ring to relieve pressure. You can buy these at your local pharmacy or drug store. (note: patients with diabetes or circulatory problems should not use 40% salicylic acid plaster).



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How can I treat myself (continued)?

- Leave the plaster and pad in place overnight or for as long as 3 - 4 days for very thick lesions.
- Use a file, pumice stone, or towel to rub away the excess skin and soften it (after bathing is a good time).
- Repeat this until the corn or callus disappears, then wear a protective pad over the area to keep it from growing back.