

# Med-Sense Guaranteed Association JOURNAL

## Inside This Issue

- Focus on Your Feet: Take Steps to Protect Foot Health
- Noonlight Member Benefit
- 5 Ways to Get the Most Out of Your Massage Experience
- Giving Back



**MSGGA**  
Med-Sense Guaranteed Association



## Focus on Your Feet

### Take Steps to Protect Foot Health

Most of us go through each day without ever thinking about our feet. It's only when something goes wrong that we tend to realize just how important our feet really are.

"Our feet are usually covered with shoes and socks, and they're easy to forget about, or we might take them for granted," says Dr. David G. Armstrong, a foot doctor (podiatrist) and professor of surgery at the University of Southern California. "But we shouldn't ignore them. Foot problems can really limit activity and make it hard to move through the world."

Your feet are surprisingly complex. Each foot has 26 bones, 33 joints, and a network of nerves and blood vessels. Your feet also have more than 100 muscles and connectors, called tendons and ligaments.

“All of these work together to give your whole body stability and balance as you move around every day,” says Dr. Stephanie C. Wu, a podiatrist at Rosalind Franklin University in Chicago. “Our lowly feet have big responsibilities.”

You can help your hard-working feet stay at their best. Start by being alert to foot pain or other problems that might need a doctor’s care.



## Pay Attention to Problems

The foot’s complexity means there’s a lot that can go wrong. “Foot problems can range from annoying to devastating,” says Dr. Crystal M. Holmes, who heads the podiatry program at Michigan Medicine. “You can have skin problems like athlete’s foot, which is caused by fungus. Or you can have warts, which is a viral infection. These generally are not serious. But certain other skin infections can wreak havoc if left untreated.”

You can also get painful structural problems, like bunions or hammertoes. A hammertoe is a stiff bend in a toe’s middle joint. It can be caused by stubbing your toe or wearing shoes that are too tight. A bunion is a bony bump, usually on the outer side of the big toe. Bunions tend to run in families. Both conditions can first be treated by wearing shoes with plenty of toe room. Eventually, surgery may be needed.

Other common foot problems include sports injuries, toenail troubles, and painful joints. A condition called plantar fasciitis causes sharp heel pain that declines throughout the day. Many people with plantar fasciitis recover in a few months, in part by avoiding the activities that cause pain. If the pain lasts longer, medical treatment may be needed.

Your feet can also provide early clues to problems in other parts of your body. For example, stiff joints in your feet or ankles could be a sign of arthritis elsewhere. Swollen feet could warn of high blood pressure or kidney or heart disease. Tingling, burning, or numbness might signal some type of nerve damage. And nerve damage in the foot is often a warning sign of diabetes.



## Foot Health and Diabetes

People who have diabetes need to pay special attention to their feet. Diabetes affects about one in 10 Americans. Most people with diabetes—about 60% to 70%—develop nerve problems. These can range from mild to severe. Diabetic nerve damage, or diabetic neuropathy, can make you lose feeling in your feet, which can be dangerous.

“A person with diabetic neuropathy may step on a nail and not realize it for days, because they’ve lost feeling in the feet. Or they may put their foot into a hot bath, but if the water’s scalding hot and they have no feeling, they can develop burns,” Holmes says.

Delayed detection of wounds or burns can lead to delayed treatment. And delayed treatment raises the risk of infection.

Foot infections can be especially harmful to people with diabetes. Good blood flow helps to heal foot wounds and deliver medications like antibiotics that can help fight infections. But diabetes reduces blood flow to the feet. That can prevent infections from healing.

When infections don’t heal, amputation of a toe, foot, or part of the leg may be needed. Amputation can prevent a deadly infection from spreading to the rest of the body. But amputations are risky and can seriously affect quality of life.

That’s why NIH is funding several research efforts to improve the treatment of diabetic foot problems and reduce the need for amputations. “Research teams are looking for better ways to heal foot wounds, open up blood flow, and fight infections,” Armstrong says.



No matter your age or health conditions, wearing well-fitting, supportive shoes can have a big effect on your health. But research suggests that many of us wear shoes that are the wrong size or ill-fitting.

“Our foot tends to widen a bit as we get older, and it can also widen during pregnancy,” Wu says. “So if your foot size was measured at age 20, it probably won’t be the same years later.”

Feet also tend to gradually widen as the day goes on. “So we often recommend that if you’re shopping for new shoes, go in the afternoon or evening when your feet are a little bigger,” Wu says.

If your feet haven’t been measured in a while, consider doing so. A foot-measuring device, called a Brannock Device, can measure both the length and width of your feet. It’s usually available at shoe stores.

Experts suggest leaving a little space at the front of the shoe, because when we walk, our feet tend to shift forward.

“I’ve seen a lot of patients who end up losing a toenail, or it turns black, because the front of the shoe doesn’t have enough room,” Wu says.

Make sure that the shoes are comfortable from the start. “If they don’t feel right, don’t think that you can break them in later. That could cause blisters and pain,” Holmes says. “Pain is meant to be a cardinal sign to tell you that something is wrong. When you don’t listen to it, you get in trouble.”

Any time you have foot pain that lingers, it’s a good idea to see a health care provider. Give your feet the attention they deserve.

“I suggest to my patients that when you go to your doctor, and you take your clothes off for the exam, make sure you take off your shoes and your socks too. Have the doctor take a look at your feet,” Holmes says. “I think that’s important, to catch foot problems sooner than later.”

*Article reprinted from NIH-News In Health*



## WISE CHOICES

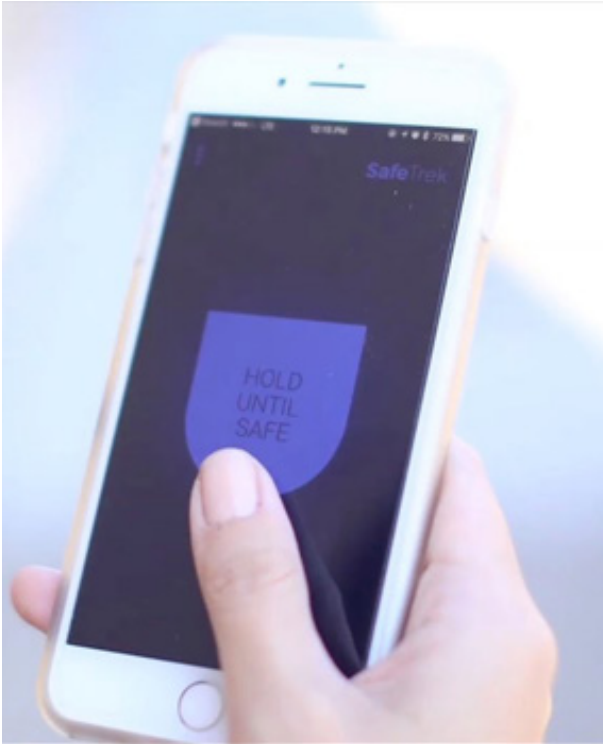
### Basic Care for Healthy Feet

- **Wash your feet every day and dry them completely.**
- **Change your socks at least once a day.**
- **Check your feet regularly for cuts, sores, swelling, dryness, and infected toenails. Apply treatment as needed.**
- **Wear well-fitting, protective footwear that provides proper support. Check your shoes regularly and replace them when they’re worn out.**
- **If visiting a salon for nail and foot care, choose a salon that is clean and licensed by your state’s cosmetology board. Make sure the salon sterilizes instruments (such as nail clippers, scissors, and other tools) after each use.**
- **See a health care provider if you have on-going pain or numbness in your feet, or cuts or sores that don’t heal.**



# NOONLIGHT

FORMERLY SAFETREK



**To protect and comfort people so they can live freely**

**We live in a big, unpredictable world. You never know what will happen or when you will need to dial 911. With Noonlight, first responders are just a touch away!**

Noonlight is a mobile platform built to handle emergency situations. An alarm can be initiated manually by the user or through automatic triggers such as a car crash. The app instantly connects to a dispatcher who can track the user's real-time location and send emergency personnel.



Users signal an emergency using a trigger button. The user can hold the button as long as they feel unsafe or tap it quickly, like a panic button, for instant help.



Noonlight accesses GPS location services to send your real-time location. Users can opt to release your location only when the app is open.



Certified dispatchers notify police of your exact location when the button is released. Users can enter a 4-digit pin within 10 seconds if they feel safe and the police response will be cancelled. Dispatchers will also contact you via text to check your status.

## Integrates With:

- ✓ Alexa
- ✓ Google Home
- ✓ Nest Protect
- ✓ Lyft
- ✓ Uber
- ✓ Crash Detection
- ✓ Apple Watch
- ✓ Fitbit (Coming Soon)
- ✓ Wyze (Coming Soon)

And more!

Log in at [www.medsensemembersonline.com](http://www.medsensemembersonline.com) for more information.

# 5 Ways to Get the Most Out of Your Massage Experience



(BPT) - Massage therapy is known for its relaxing and restorative value, but did you also know that it is a powerful health-care tool for your body and mind? To get the most out of your next massage experience, follow these tips from Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals, the leading association representing massage therapists and bodyworkers.

## 1. Set goals

What do you want to get out of your massage? Do you have any injuries you'd like to target? Are you holding tension in certain areas because of work or stress that you would like to address? Or do you need some general hands-on therapy to help loosen up? What type of massage you'll need will depend on your goals.

Before you head to your massage appointment, think about the reason for your massage. When you meet your massage therapist or bodywork professional, let them know your goals for the session so they can gauge how to properly address your needs.

## 2. Prepare your body

On the day of your appointment, make sure you've had a light snack beforehand, but nothing too heavy that might create discomfort while you're on the massage table. Stay hydrated before and after your session, and avoid intoxicants or alcohol.

Massage is a physical activity, and it helps to prepare your body accordingly. Gentle stretches before your session not only get your muscle tissue ready to receive bodywork, they help you detect areas that need additional attention and can help you feel more comfortable as you lay on the massage table.





### 3. Start the session relaxed

Before your massage starts, try and relax so you can be physically and mentally ready to receive the therapeutic benefits of a massage. One way to relax is by using breathing techniques. An easy technique to remember is Box Breathing - breathe in while counting to five, hold your breath for five counts, slowly exhale for five, hold again for five counts, then repeat. Try listening to relaxing music while breathing to promote relaxation as you prepare for your massage.

### 4. During the session: Communicate

By having clear and open communication between client and massage therapist, practitioners can create a successful therapeutic massage experience together. Don't be shy to talk about your level of comfort with the massage table or face cradle, or the level of pressure the therapist is using ... even the temperature of the room.

Just like going to your doctor, a massage is a form of health care administered by professionals and should be treated similarly to any other health care experience. For a session to be safe and effective, the practitioner must set clear boundaries and expectations and the client must understand what a therapeutic massage session does and does not include. Open and clear communication is paramount to creating a successful therapeutic massage experience.

### 5. Post-session: Wind down

After a session, it's important to let your body wind down and feel the effects of the massage. Here are some ways to wind down after a massage session

- As you wind down, think about your goals and assess if it was a successful massage experience and what could be done to improve your next session.
- Continue to replenish your body with healthy foods and plenty of water so you can feel your best.
- Relax! Breathe, listen to music or do whatever you prefer to stay calm and let the effects of the massage settle in.

When administered by licensed professionals, massage therapy is a powerful form of health care that provides wellness, self-care, therapy, relief and comfort. Using these tips, you'll set yourself up for a relaxing and productive session.

To find a massage or bodywork professional in your community, visit [MassageTherapy.com](https://www.MassageTherapy.com).



# Giving Back



College has never been more expensive than it is today. In an effort to ease the financial burden for students and their families, MSGA offers college scholarships to members and their dependents. Since the start of the scholarship program in 2015 MSGA has awarded 427 individual scholarships totaling over 1.5 million dollars.

Each year, when given the opportunity to further help the community outside of our scholarship program, we provide financial gifts to select nursing schools. These gifts have enabled those schools to provide scholarships to a number of their own nursing students who might otherwise not have been able to complete their studies due to financial stress. The following are schools we have proudly supported over the years:

- **St. Louis University** - MSGA worked with St. Louis University to establish the MSGA Nursing Scholarship Fund and gifted \$75,000 in 2017, \$25,000 in 2018, \$25,000 in 2019, \$25,000 in 2020, \$15,000 in 2021 and \$15,000 in 2022 into this fund. The Go Further Scholarship initiative via St. Louis University has a matching program that doubled the impact of the gifts. Thanks to donations from MSGA and the matching funds, the scholarship fund grew to \$280,000. The funds have been awarded to those nursing students who show financial need and academic success.
- **College of St. Mary** - Located in Omaha, Nebraska, the College of Saint Mary is a Catholic women's university that has an outstanding nursing program. MSGA provided \$75,000 in 2017, \$25,000 in 2018, \$25,000 in 2019, \$25,000 in 2020, \$15,000 in 2021, and \$15,000 in 2022 to the school which in turn has provided 36 students with \$5,000 scholarships.
- **St. John's School of Nursing** - St. John's School of Nursing is located in Springfield, IL, and offers upper-division bachelor nursing degree programs to those who have already completed their liberal arts and science courses at other institutions. The St. John's School of Nursing is associated with the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis and offers students hands-on experience to accompany their nursing program. Since December 2015, MSGA has provided a total of \$180,000 to the St. John's School of Nursing. These funds have been awarded to students at the nursing school.

MSGA plans to continue these programs in 2023  
Please continue to check the website for more information.

<https://www.medsensememberson.com/>



For information regarding your membership  
and association services, call or write:

**Membership Services Office  
Med-Sense Guaranteed Association  
12444 Powerscourt Drive  
Suite 500A  
St. Louis, MO 63131  
1-800-992-8044 or (636) 530-7200**

Articles in this newsletter are meant to be informative, enlightening, and helpful to you. While all information contained herein is meant to be completely factual, it is always subject to change. Articles are not intended to provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Consult your doctor before starting any exercise program.



**MSGGA**  
Med-Sense Guaranteed Association