



## NewsWorthy Analysis

Foot Ailments Survey  
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**Kelton**  
RESEARCH



## Down At Their Heels

### Heel Pain Tops America's List Of Persistent Foot Ailments

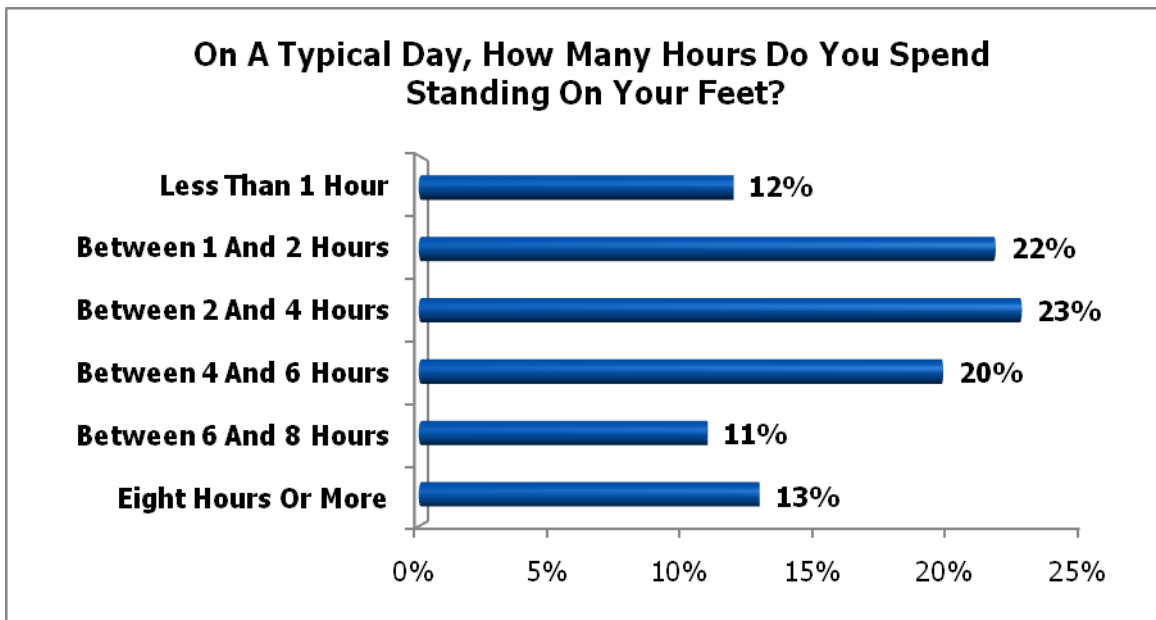
The American Podiatric Medical Association recently conducted a national study which investigated how frequently Americans suffer from foot ailments, specifically heel pain. There were 1,082 survey respondents, a nationally representative sample of the U.S. population. Of these respondents, 818 had experienced at least one foot ailment within the last year, with 429 Americans reporting heel pain. This study was conducted at a 95% confidence interval with 3% margin of error.

From standing for several hours each day to wearing ill-fitting shoes, exertion and discomfort take a serious toll on American feet. For many, the pain is serious enough to inhibit daily activities. Yet when problems arise, getting proper foot care is not the first thing on most American minds. A new survey by the American Podiatric Medical Association shows that this combination of bad habits and a reliance on quick fixes may be contributing to the nation's foot woes. With heel pain as the most common complaint among those who suffer foot ailments, few people who have experienced it have taken the time to get their condition diagnosed. Furthermore, heel pain sufferers tend to consult sources other than podiatrists, instead of seeking appropriate professional care.

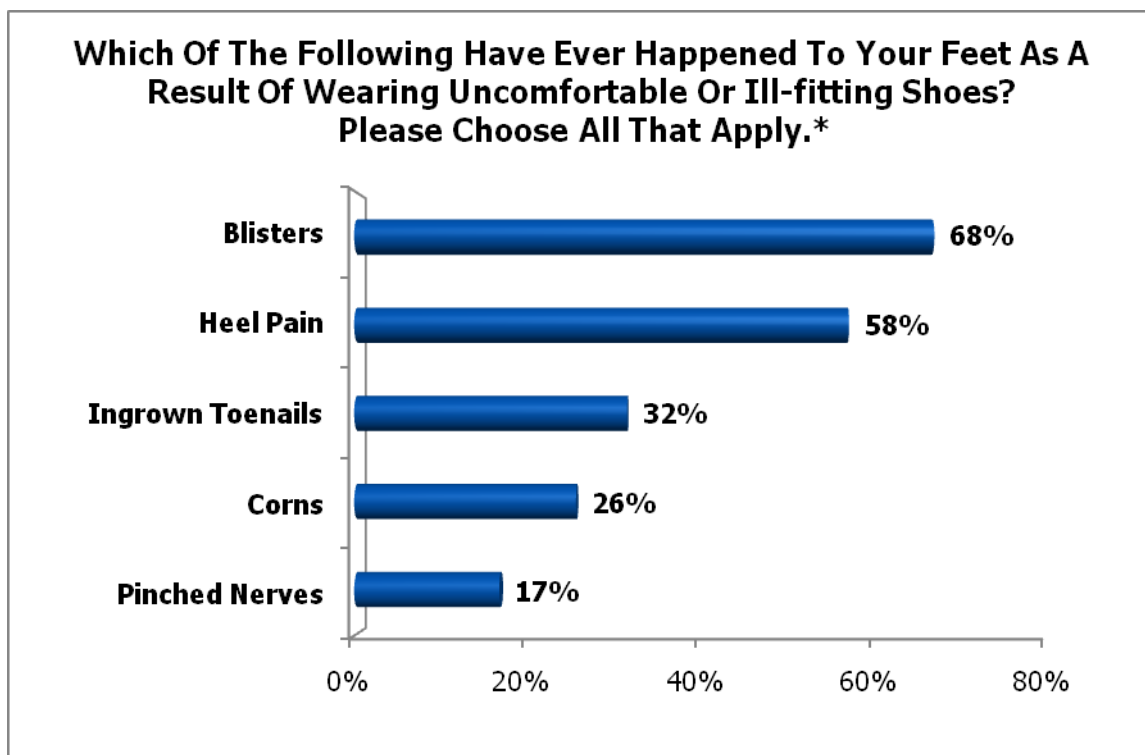
#### 1) FOOTSORE NATION

With a range of widespread and sometimes self-inflicted conditions, Americans' foot problems can get in the way of their daily lives – heel pain in particular can exact such a toll.

- **National Standing.** Americans spend a lot of time on their feet – nearly a quarter (24%) report a full six hours or more on a typical day. A fifth (20%) regularly log between four and six standing hours per day.



- **Bad Choices.** Almost two thirds (64%) of Americans confess they wear shoes that hurt their feet. Nearly three in 10 (29%) who sport painful shoes say they do so at least once a week, and 12 percent make this choice daily.
- **Walking Wounded.** Furthermore, nearly eight in 10 (78%) Americans have experienced foot problems as a result of wearing uncomfortable or ill-fitting shoes. Sixty-eight percent of those whose shoes have hurt their feet have gotten blisters, and nearly six in 10 (58%) have suffered heel pain.

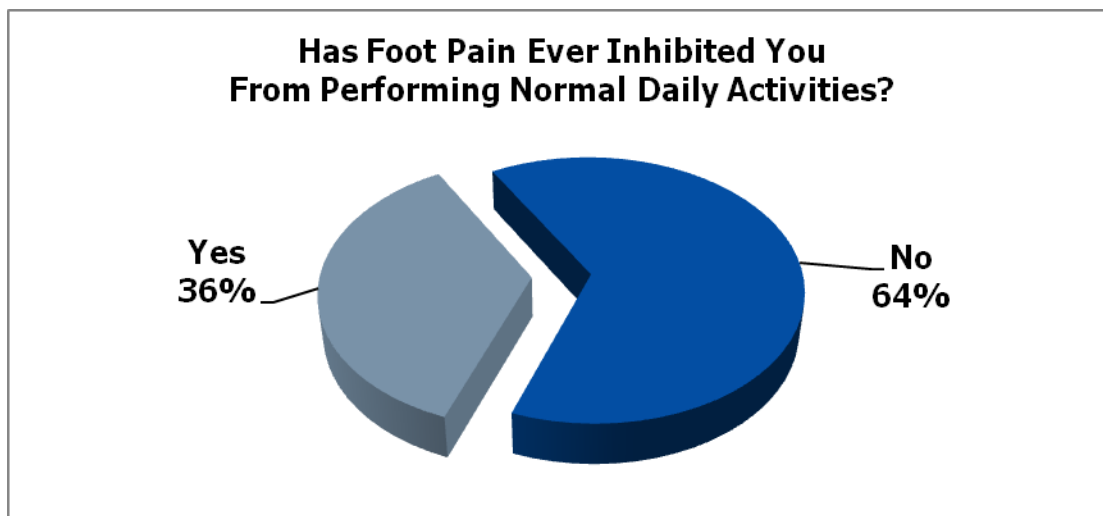


\*Among respondents who have had foot problems as a result of wearing uncomfortable or ill-fitting shoes

- **Women Fare Worse.** Far more women (87%) than men (68%) have suffered due to painful footwear. These women also report blisters (73% vs. 61%) and heel pain (63% vs. 51%) in greater numbers than their male counterparts.
- **Increasing Heel Pain And Pinched Nerves.** Compared to the APMA's Sweet Feet Survey of March 2008\*, more women who have experienced problems from uncomfortable shoes reported heel pain (63% vs. 45%) and pinched nerves (19% vs. 13%) among their foot complaints, while fewer cited ingrown toenails (28% vs. 34%).
- **Youthful Heel Pain.** Nearly three quarters (74%) of 18 to 29-year-olds whose feet were affected by uncomfortable shoes report heel pain as a result, compared to 54 percent of those 30 and older.
- **Catalogue Of Aches.** Ingrown toenails (32%), corns (26%) and pinched nerves (17%) are further conditions plaguing Americans whose feet have suffered due to uncomfortable or ill-fitting shoes.

The cumulative effect of the above problems can hinder Americans from completing their daily activities.

- **Unable to Function.** Nearly four in 10 (36%) Americans say their foot pain has been so severe it has prevented them from performing everyday tasks.



- **Sideline By Heel Pain.** Heel pain is more likely to interfere with people's lives than other foot ailments: Six in 10 (60%) Americans who have experienced heel pain in the last 12 months say they have had trouble with daily activities, compared to 24 percent who have had other issues with their feet in the past year.
- **In Need of TLC.** Dry, rough, cracked or irritated skin is also plaguing many American feet with nearly three quarters (73%) suffering from this condition. Almost half (48%) of respondents reported that they endure this condition frequently.

\* Sweet Feet Survey, March 2008, Kelton Research. Sample = 500 nationally representative women ages 18 and over

- **Seeking Lotion.** More females than males (59% vs. 37%) that their feet get dry, cracked or irritated frequently.

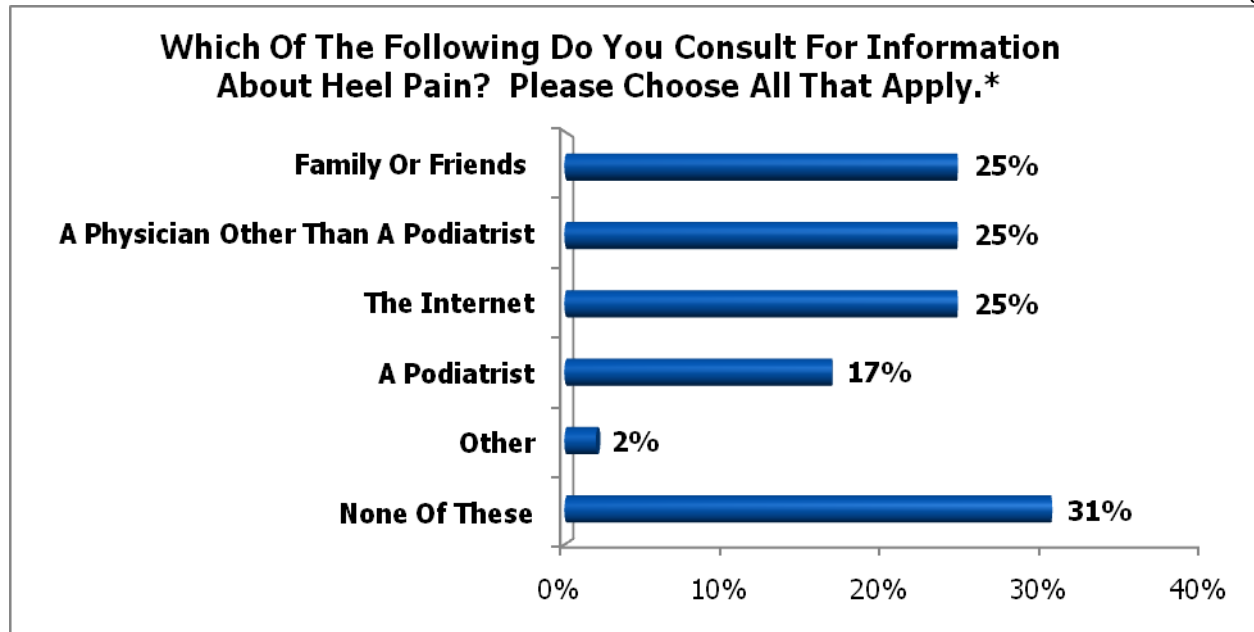
## 2) FEELING IT IN THEIR HEELS

- **Heel Problems In The Past Year.** Ninety-one percent of Americans who have experienced foot ailments have dealt with such troubles in the last twelve months. Heel pain is the most popular affliction, 43 percent of those who've had problems in the last year experienced this in particular.
- **Heel-Sore Women.** Half (50%) of women who have experienced foot ailments in the past year count heel pain among them, compared to 34 percent of their male counterparts.
- **A Younger Problem.** More younger Americans (ages 18 to 49) who have had foot problems in the last twelve months have experienced heel pain in that time frame (48%) compared to members of the same group ages 50 and older (34%).
- **Long-Term Sufferers.** While 15 percent of Americans who currently experience heel pain have endured it between one and two years, more than one-third (35%) of them have had it for two years or more.
- **Overworked Heels.** Approximately three in 10 (29%) Americans who currently experience heel pain believe overuse or exertion is the primary cause of their suffering.
- **Heel Harmers.** Other culprits, such as ill-fitting shoes (23%) and flat feet (15%) are cited as a source of trouble by Americans who currently experience heel pain.
- **Guilty As Charged.** Twenty-seven percent of women who currently experience heel pain report footwear is the primary cause, compared to 17 percent of their male counterparts.

## 3) BAD HEEL HABITS

Few heel pain sufferers seek out the advice of podiatrists, nor are they especially proactive about improving their condition.

- **Questionable Sources.** Sixty-nine percent of American heel pain sufferers seek out information regarding their condition, but only 17 percent do so from podiatrists. The Internet (25%), doctors other than podiatrists (25%), friends and family (25%) are more commonly consulted.

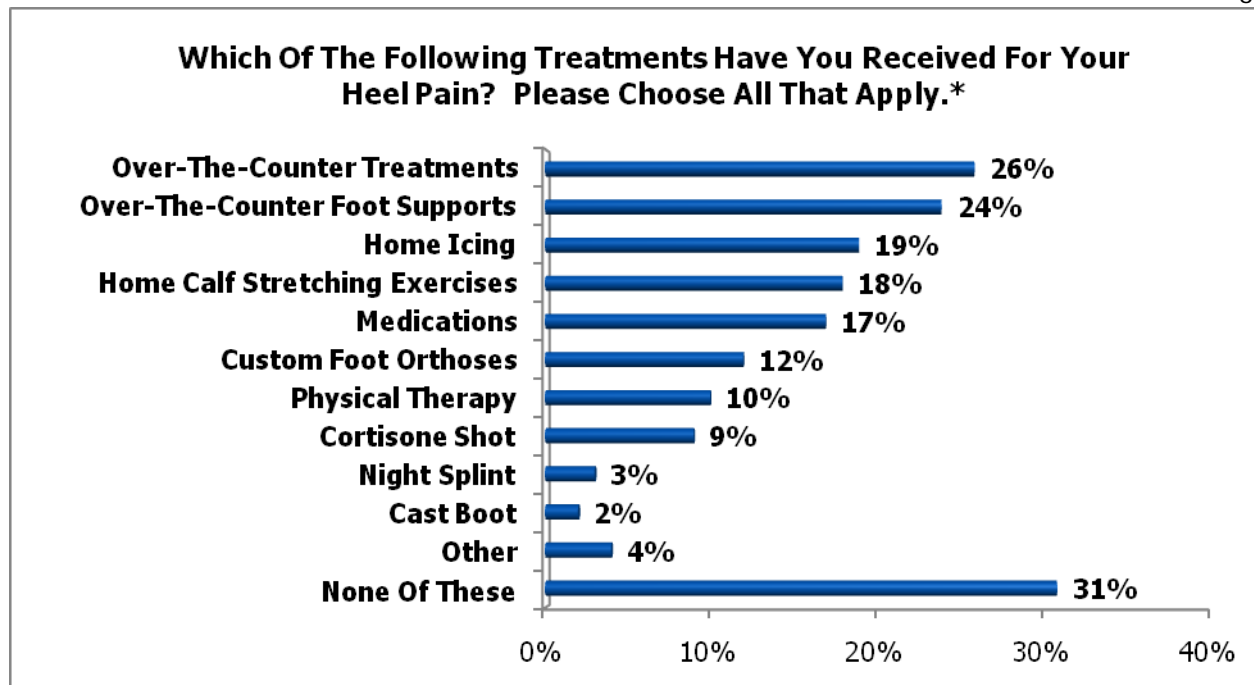


\*Among respondents who currently experience heel pain

- **Ill-Informed.** Fewer younger Americans (ages 18 to 49) who currently have heel pain have consulted a podiatrist about their problem, compared to their older counterparts (12% vs. 27%).
- **Making Things Worse.** Over one-third (35%) of heel pain sufferers feel the shoes they typically wear don't help their heel pain.

#### 4) HEEL HELP

- **And The Diagnosis Is...** Many who currently experience heel pain have not had their ailment diagnosed by a physician: less than four in 10 (36%) have conditions that have been diagnosed by a doctor. Among this group, the most common diagnose is heel spurs (42%) followed by plantar fasciitis (26%), and neuritis (12%).
- **Top Remedies.** Over-the-counter remedies (26%) and foot supports (24%) are the most common treatments heel pain sufferers have used, followed by home icing (19%), calf stretching exercises (18%) and medications (17%).



\*Among respondents who currently experience heel pain

- **Rest Is Best.** Rest has been the most effective home treatment for 37 percent of Americans who have experienced heel pain. Leg elevation (22%) and foot pads (14%) have also provided reliable relief for this group.

## 5) ADDITIONAL AFFLICTIONS

Despite the dominance of heel pain, American feet are hardly limited to this particular problem.

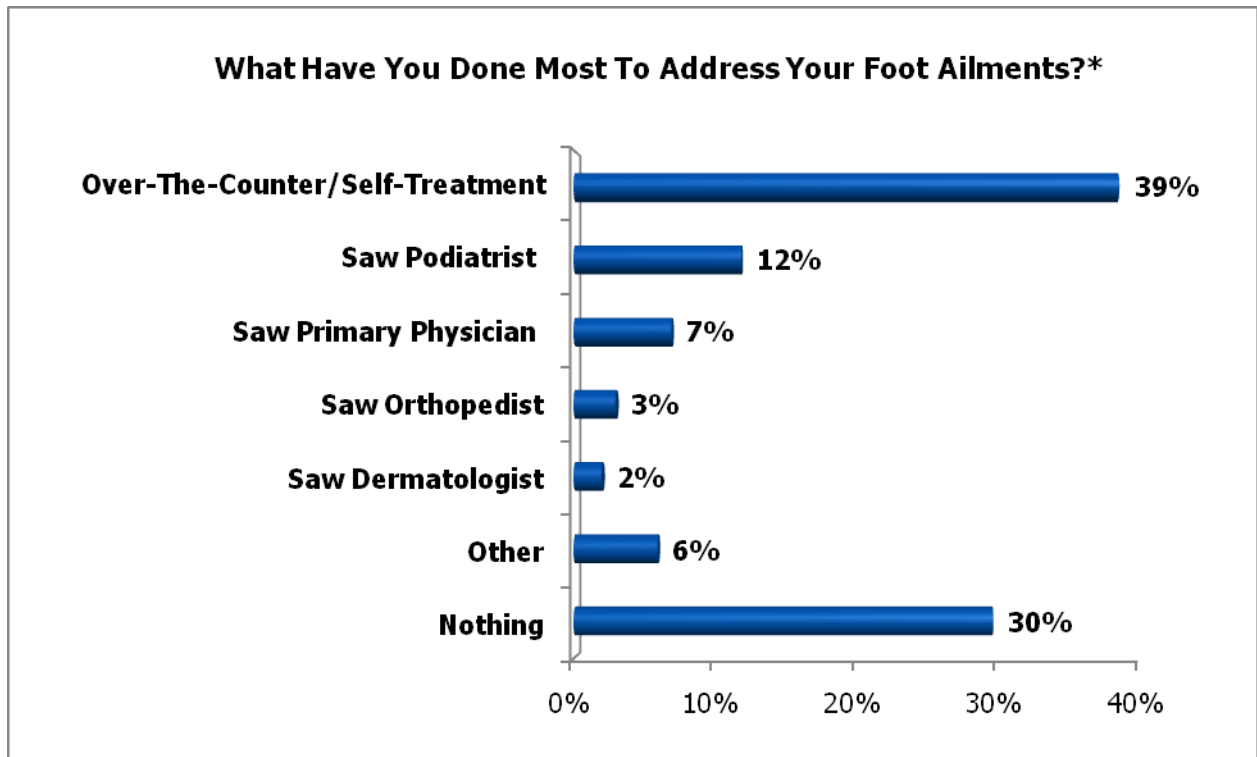
- **Supporting Cast.** Additional foot ailments that respondents have experienced within the past year include pain in the balls of their feet (35%), nail problems (33%) and sweaty feet or foot odor (32%).
  - **Gender Gap.** More women than men are bothered by aches in the balls of their feet (41% vs. 28%) and shoe pain (35% vs. 19%).
  - **Age Divide.** More 18 to 49 year-olds compared to those age 50 and above cite pain in the balls of their feet (40% vs. 26%) and shoe pain (34% vs. 18%) among their gripes.
- **Upward Trend.** Compared to 10 percent in 2007, 19 percent of women who have had foot problems reported they've experienced pain in the balls of their feet.\*

## 6) COPING STRATEGIES

\* 2007 Consumer Survey, December 2006, infosurv. Sample = 801 nationally representative Americans who have experienced at least one foot ailment

Those who have suffered any sort of foot ailment do little about it beyond making sensible shoe decisions.

- **Quick Foot Fixes.** Almost four in 10 (39%) Americans who have experienced foot ailments rely on over-the-counter and self treatments for relief. Three in 10 (30%) of this group choose to do nothing to relieve their ailing feet.



\*Among respondents who have experienced foot ailments

- **Few Seek Podiatrists.** Only a quarter (25%) of Americans who have experienced foot ailments have seen any sort of physician about their problem, and less than half that amount (12%) have visited a podiatrist.
- **Older And Wiser.** Americans ages 50 and older who have experienced foot ailments have seen podiatrists more often than their 18 to 49 year old counterparts (20% vs. 7%).
- **Lower Popularity.** Compared to 2007, fewer men and women who have experienced foot ailments have seen podiatrists. Fifteen percent of men with foot trouble say they have done so, compared to 24 percent two years ago. For women who have had foot trouble, the change is similar – 11 percent had consulted a podiatrist in 2008, compared to 25 percent in 2007\*.

Overall, Americans report good intentions when selecting non-athletic shoes, though their emphasis varies by gender and age.

- **Comfort-Focused.** Almost three in five (58%) Americans place more importance on comfort when selecting non-athletic shoes, compared to only five percent who make style their priority.

\* 2007 Consumer Survey, December 2006, infosurv.

- **Best Of Both Worlds.** Thirty-eight percent look for a balance between comfort and style in non-athletic shoes.
- **Good To Their Feet.** More men (68%) than women (48%) say comfort is their top priority when purchasing non-athletic shoes.
- **Comfort Can Wait.** Thirty-seven percent of 18 to 29 year olds say comfort is their goal when purchasing shoes, compared to over six in 10 (62%) of those age 30 and older.