

Feet

by [Claudia W.](#)

I love my feet. They carry me wherever I want to go. The more they walk, the more beautiful they get. In popular imagery you don't see feet too often. Ads hardly ever show the feet of the models, unless the ads are about shoes, and then they show just that : shoes.

A visit to the Internet surprised me. I typed "feet". 258 million sites. The word "fetish" narrowed it down to 7.89 million sites. The fantasies cover a broad range from "International Celebrity Feet...your premier source for quality celebrity feet images" to toe sucking to the ultimate feet job. Few of them feature feet in their primary action (walking) or men's feet. 14.3 million sites respond to "men's feet", with only 827 000 fetish sites – no sites for straight women though. And pictures are surprisingly dull : white socks are as far as it gets when it comes to fantasies about men's feet.

We leave it to the readers to interpret this disappointing situation and go back to the main issue : feet. The foot and the ankle have 26 bones between them. There are 33 joints in the foot and more than 100 muscles, tendons and ligaments.

I learned that in an average lifetime, we walk about 180 000 km ; and for 30 000 years now we do it wearing shoes. How this was found out ? Scientists examined prehistoric foot bones : "During barefoot walking, the smaller toes flex for traction, keeping the toe bones strong. Supportive footwear lessens the roll of the little toes, thus weakening them." So, we conclude : Barefoot is best ! Research of shoed and un-shoed populations demonstrates that un-shoed populations have fewer foot deformities than those who wear shoes. Also when these people start to wear shoes the incidence of foot problems increase.

With a certain contradiction to these findings health professionals recommend wearing shoes when walking : "Don't go barefoot. This increases the risk of injury and infection and provides no support for either the foot or ankle."

You can't talk about feet without talking about shoes. Shoes aren't innocent. They are in reality feet on display, and they tell a whole story about you. It is not always the story you would like others to hear. It may happen that doc Martens shoes hide a foot that you would not recognize in a high-heel shoe.

As a minimalist, I admire the minimal sandal : a sole and some device to grab it with the toes. Unfortunately I never managed to possess a pair is there any carpenter out there ?, and so far I have to content myself with flip-flops. They are almost equally simple and come close to walking barefoot. They allow maximum space for my toes, and I can even wear jewelry.

You can find specialised shoes for every purpose, some of them providing the additional pleasure of masochism.

And then there are high heels. Now this is a tricky one, in our post-feminist times, where it is said that women have liberated themselves from male oppression to the point that they can allow themselves to wear high heels again. Again we leave it to the readers to make up their mind about all this...but aren't they just so damn sexy ?!

More about feet (and shoes) on :

<http://www.betashoemuseum.ca>

<http://www.health24.com>

<http://www.feetforlife.org>

<http://www.dundee.gov.uk/shoe/exhibition.htm>