**CAP health & wellness handout: FOOT CARE**

In the field personnel who cannot walk due to injury must be carried. This places an additional and unnecessary burden on the other members of the ES ground team and degrades mission accomplishment. In other less strenuous activities foot injuries can interfere with your participation and enjoyment.

Various considerations merit attention in keeping our feet ready for action!

* Shoes
* Socks
* Blisters
* Athlete's foot
* Nail care

**Boots**

* Get the right size boots that fit your feet properly
* Keep your boots in good condition
* Break in boots **thoroughly** before wear for prolonged periods

**Socks**

* Medium cushion soles are effective in padding your foot
* Wool is a good insulator when wet
* The sock should reach the top of your boot
* Socks must be in good repair
* Take several pairs on field operations
  + One pair on your feet
  + One pair drying
  + One pair in your daypack

**Blisters**

* Good leaders and team medics check the feet of their subordinates during rest and meal stops in the field
* Ensure that socks are clean and dry
* Inspect the feet for "hot spots" and blisters
* Initiate proper treatment for blisters
* Enforce policy on keeping feet dry and clean
* Avoid preventable foot injury that may degrade mission performance
* **Treatment of a "hot spot"**
  + Prior to blister formation an irritated area on the foot needs attention
  + Common sites for hot spots are on the heel and the ball of the foot
  + Protection with "moleskin" padded dressing may prevent blister formation and reduce pain

**Treatment of a blister**

* If the blister is unlikely to break and is not painful:
  + Apply tincture of benzoin to the area surrounding the blister to aid in sticking the dressing to the foot
  + Cut a hole in a piece of moleskin larger than the blister and place it around the blister
  + Pad the blistered area with a non-adherent dressing and tape
  + Reassess the blister frequently
* If the blister is painful or likely to rupture:
  + Cleanse the blister with alcohol
  + Carefully lance the blister with a needle and evacuate the fluid
  + Apply a non-adherent dressing over the blister
  + Reassess the blister regularly
  + Be vigilant for infection and seek medical care if the area appears infected

**Athlete's foot**

* Athlete's foot is a fungal infection of the skin
* Promoted by dark, warm, and damp conditions
* Treatment with a topical over-the-counter antifungal product is usually effective

**Ingrown Toenail**

* Occurs when the toenails are cut too short in a rounded fashion or when “splinters” of toenail are left at the edge of the nail. These can dig into the surrounding soft tissue as the nail grows out.
* The problem is avoided by properly cutting the toenails

***Recommendations:***

* Avoid preventable foot injury by proper foot hygiene
* Wear proper fitting and broken in boots
* Wear proper socks that are clean and dry
* Proactively treat common foot ailments to prevent injury that degrades mission performance