

## 6. BLISTER SISTER

Blisters are the main reason people drop out of endurance trekking events. A lot can be done to prevent blisters, but in extreme heat you may not be successful. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. You'll be so glad you did if you manage to have happy feet during Coastrek.

### BLISTERS: PREVENTION AND CARE

#### Blisters are best prevented.

If you get blisters, you will be miserable. And they could wreck your entire trek or even cause you to withdraw when the rest of your body is feeling fantastic! Try these proven Wild Women on Top techniques to help you prevent blisters:

- Smother your feet in Vaseline or Paw Paw Ointment every 4 hours to reduce the friction from socks rubbing against skin when you sweat. Sounds disgusting and the first time you do it, you will go "eww"! But it works. And when we say smother, we mean it. Don't lightly coat it on. Use great globs of the stuff and wipe the surplus inside your socks before you put them on. This is the single most effective method of preventing blisters for Coastrekkers.
- Use New Zealand foot fleece. This great product is from oily Kiwi sheep and it works a treat. Place a walnut sized ball of foot fleece on the potential blister sight and carefully place your sock over it, taking care to ensure that it remains in the right spot. Over time, the lanoline in the wool will cause the fleece to become a frictionless part of your sock.
- Learn from the marathon runners and wear Injinji toe socks so that all toes are separated, reducing the risk of over heating and preventing blisters.
- Pre tape your feet or have a podiatrist do it for you paying special attention to known hot spots. Ensure you use a hyperalergenic brand such as Fixomul or Hypafix. These are gentle on your skin and stretch to allow movement.
- In the 3 weeks leading up to your trek, moisturize your feet twice a day so that the skin is elastic and flexible then maintain with daily application of a natural moisturiser.



- Wear in your runners, trail runners or boots thoroughly in Coastrek training. Don't, under any circumstances, wear new shoes in the Event.
- Try high quality thin sock liners which can reduce the friction between sock and skin
- Use high quality clean socks and change every 4 hours during Coastrek.
- Know your feet: Coastrek training in your runners or trailrunners will help you identify where hot spots are likely to occur. Cover these areas with blister pads or tape before you trek.
- Keep feet dry at all costs
- Ensure that your socks fit perfectly. If they are too big they will develop folds which cause blisters. If they are too small, they can put pressure on your toe nails and cause you to loose them!
- If you feel sand or dirt, prickles or a fold in your sock, stop and remove it
- If you feel a hot spot, stop and tape it with Fixomul or Vaseline or Paw Paw Ointment or foot fleece it.
- Bring a spare pair of runners/boots in case you get a hot spot
- Wear cuffs to prevent little bits of dirt or sand getting into your shoes
- Resist the temptation of having a pedicure just before your trek. Pedicures remove several layers of skin and leave sensitive layers exposed. One of our members, Jan, had a pedicure just before a 50k Trailwalker training session. She developed such huge blisters, that her entire foot was one pussy red raw mass and we never saw her again!

- If you have dead hard skin building up on your toes and heels, gently remove in the shower gradually several weeks before your trek. We recommend the Heros Chiropodic hard sponge.
- Keep your toe nails short, and we mean short! Clip them so that no nail sticks out over the end of your toes, or you'll end up losing toe nails.

**ORTHOTICS:** Please ensure you check with your podiatrist regarding your orthotics. Your feet change over time, during pregnancy and weight gain. Also some feet problems are self correcting. If you wear orthotics, please have them checked every 4 years to ensure you still need them. We have a horror story from one of our members, Jill, who did two 100k Endurance treks, both times ending up with excruciatingly massive blisters in a long horizontal line around her heels. After the second torture session, she consulted a podiatrist who told her she DID NOT need the orthotics at all!



### **BLISTER TREATMENT:**

At the first sign of chafing, or hot spot, do the following:

- Stop and cover the area with Fixomul, a blister dressing, Moleskin or an adhesive plaster. If the area is still greasy with Vaseline or Paw Paw Ointment, ensure you wipe thoroughly to remove all residues or the plaster will not stick.
- Ensure that you use a good sized piece of tape, because if you don't, the tape will roll and peel off and you'll end up with another rubbing spot and more problems. Band-Aids just won't cut it for blisters.
- Change footwear.
- Change socks at every checkpoint.

- Re smother with Vaseline or Paw Paw Ointment or foot fleece
- Runners have more cushioning than boots or trail runners. Experiment in training, remembering that there are several hard footpath and road section on Coastrek.
- Experiment with different socks. Thicker socks provide more cushioning, but are hotter, so work out what's best for you.
- Experiment with "Scholl Party Feet" for additional cushioning and to take the pressure off those sore and tired spots.
- Some Coastrekkers recommend Scholl blister blocks because they stick better than the Bandaid ones.
- Remove ALL Paw Paw or Vaseline with alcohol wipes before sticking your blister blocks.
- If the blister has a small visible bubble, use some blister padding (available from the chemist); tape it to the area with the blister in the centre to take pressure off the area.
- If the blister has developed into a large fluid filled bubble: Prick with a sterile needle, empty the fluid, clean with antiseptic wipe or Tea Tree Oil and protect as above.
- Consult the nearest St Johns Ambulance station for assistance during the event.
- DO NOT REMOVE THE PROTECTIVE COATING OF SKIN UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES! This is both protective and clean and if you take good care of the area, it might re-attach.

### **CHAFFING:**

Chaffing is common in endurance trekking events, but even more likely in the heat. You will be surprised at the places you get chaffing, but its best dealt with by prevention. Try the following methods in training:

1. Put Vaseline or Paw Paw Ointment in any area that rubbing occurs. This includes underarms, nipples, inner thighs, and sometimes even between your bum cheeks! You might also experience chaffing from your pack or bra straps. Have your Vaseline or Paw Paw Ointment handy just in case and apply at the first notice of discomfort.
2. Correct clothing can also prevent

chaffing. Bike shorts are popular for this reason. Training in the right undies is also important. Ensure you have undies with flat seams.

3. Ensure you choose garments made from wicking fabrics that draw sweat away from the body.

