



# The Road to Recovery: Speed It Up with Physical Therapy



## About the Doctor

Mark Gasparini, DPM

Since he was young, Dr. Mark Gasparini always wanted to go into the medical field so that he could help other people. Using this as his motivation, he earned his Doctorate of Podiatric Medicine from the New York College of Podiatric Medicine (New York, New York). He completed his undergraduate studies at Fairfield University (Fairfield, Connecticut), earning his B.S. in biology. Dr. Gasparini completed his residency training—both podiatric surgery and medicine residencies—at Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center at Northport, New York.

Dr. Gasparini is a member of the American Podiatric Medical Association, New York State's Podiatric Medical Association, American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons, FAPA (Fraternal Association of Podiatrists), and the American Academy of Podiatric Practice Management. He is affiliated with North Shore University Hospital at Plainview and at Syosset, and also St. Joseph's Hospital in Bethpage, NY. His commitment is to maintaining the highest level of credentials and staying informed about the latest trends in podiatry so he can offer the best possible care for his patients.

Lots of people make New Year's resolutions to get in shape, but making up your mind to get fit doesn't necessarily mean your body's ready for it! If instead of gradually building up your routine, you dive right in with too much gusto, well that's an injury waiting to happen! You don't have to throw in the towel, though, if this happens to you. Physical therapy can help speed your recovery and get you back on track so you can keep that resolution of yours.

Typically, physical therapy entails stretches and exercises specifically designed to help the affected muscles, tendons, and bones. These exercises help to reestablish flexibility, regain strength, and restore range-of-motion and function, all of which are essential in order to return safely to your fitness routine. A physical therapist can teach you additional stretches as well, that you can follow up with and use at home. He or she can even help you determine a training schedule that works best for you and your lifestyle.

So, remember, a resolution with too much resolve can put an end to your ambition, but don't lose your motivation—talk to our expert staff and learn how physical therapy can help you reach your goals.



# Bedtime Tips for Diabetic Feet

There's nothing like a nice, relaxing bath before bed! January just happens to be Bath Safety Month, though, so while you're enjoying a little downtime, we want to remind those of you with diabetes of some safety guidelines to follow when getting ready to hit the hay.

- Before you bathe, check your feet closely for anything out of the ordinary—look for things like blisters, discoloration, and cuts that should be treated immediately to avoid infection. (If you see something, be sure to make an appointment with us right away!)
- Next, if your toenails need trimming, use sterilized clippers, making small cuts straight across so that nails are even with the tips of your toes.
- When drawing your bath, always check the temperature with your arm...stepping in with nerve damaged feet may lead to dangerous burns if you don't realize the water is too hot.
- Always use mild soap and warm water—not hot—and be sure not to soak too long, since that can impede the healing process if you have any wounds.
- When you get out, it's very important to dry your feet thoroughly, and don't forget to dry between your toes!
- Keep dry, cracked heels at bay by lightly applying moisturizer, making sure not to get it between those toes you just dried so well.
- Slip on some cozy socks if you like, but make sure they're not too tight.
- Lastly, if you decide to get up for a midnight snack, always put on your slippers to protect your feet from harm, but check them first in case there's anything in them that could damage your feet.

Follow these bedtime tips and you'll be sure to have a peaceful night's sleep.

Sweet dreams!



## Mark Your Calendars

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|-------------------|--|
| <b>January 1</b>  | New Year's Day—Have a happy one!                       |
| <b>January 6</b>  | Cuddle Up Day—Grab a blanket and a friend.             |
| <b>January 14</b> | Dress Up Your Pet Day—Sorry, Fido!!                    |
| <b>January 18</b> | Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday—Think Peace.         |
| <b>January 19</b> | National Popcorn Day—Better get poppin'.               |
| <b>January 24</b> | Compliment Day—Say something nice, make someone smile. |





# Kicking the High Heel Habit

Dressing up for all the holiday parties and New Year celebrations might be fun, but not for your feet! Those high heels can really do a number on you, and we're not just talking sore and tired tootsies! High-heeled shoes are notorious for causing bunions, hammertoes, ingrown toenails, Haglund's deformity (also appropriately termed "Pump Bump"), not to mention nerve issues in the balls of your feet and toes—the list goes on and on.

Because of the typical high heel's shape and the resulting abnormal position of your foot, pressure is not distributed evenly, toes are squished together, and heels are rubbed against by rigid backs—ouch, ouch, and ouch! Wearing them can even shorten the fibers in your calf muscles leading to stiffened Achilles tendons. No wonder it feels so good to kick off your heels at the end of the night!

Now we're not saying you have to kick 'em off for good. Like most things in life, moderation is key. Don't get in the habit of wearing high heels often. Instead, choose styles with a flat or minimal heel, plenty of wiggle room for toes, and materials that are flexible and breathable. They should be comfy right off the bat, too—there's no such thing as "breaking in" a new pair of shoes.

If you do need to slip on some pumps, just try not to wear them too long, and perhaps look into custom orthotics that can help provide some additional cushion and support. Want to find out more? Just ask our friendly staff. Now who's ready to go shoe shopping?



## Are You Ready for Some Football?

It's not too early to start planning that Super Bowl party! Kick off the festivities with this crowd-pleasing appetizer, sure to score big:

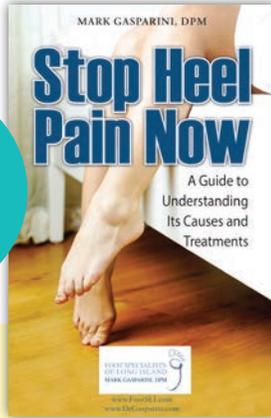
### **Buffalo Chicken Dip**

*from the Food Network Kitchen*

Mix 4 oz. softened cream cheese with a half cup each of sour cream and Frank's RedHot sauce (or ¼ cup of other hot sauce). Fold in 2 cups shredded rotisserie chicken, and pour mixture into small baking dish. Sprinkle with celery seed, chopped scallions, and shredded cheddar, then bake at 425 degrees F until bubbly. Serve with tortilla chips. Touchdown!



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# Balance Exercises to Keep You on Your Feet

Your sense of balance typically decreases as you age, which can be a contributing factor to debilitating falls. Luckily, there are some things you can do to improve your balance so you stay upright where you belong!

**Do the Flamingo** - You can start out by simply standing on one leg. Hold on to a chair, counter top, or loved one if you like, and hold the pose for 10 seconds, then switch and repeat. As you progress, you can let go, place your lifted foot on your inner thigh, or lift your leg behind you.

**Walk the Tight Rope** - Raise your arms to each side, shoulder height, then find a focal point directly in front of you. Keep staring at it while you walk one foot in front of the other, heel to toe. Gradually increase the distance.

**Strike a Pose** - Yoga and Tai Chi are both excellent exercise options to build your balance. Classes are typically inexpensive and require virtually no equipment. If you prefer to stay at home, no problem—just pick up an instructional DVD.

Strengthening your muscles and staying active can also go a long way toward keeping you on your feet. To find out more tips for not tipping over, just ask. We are always happy to help!

