

Boot Information and Blister Prevention

Foot comfort can make the difference between a fantastic tramping experience or a miserable one, and the biggest culprit for this is blisters! Blisters are caused by your boot/sock rubbing against your foot. This friction first causes a 'hot spot' (a spot on your foot which feels hot / warm / uncomfortable), which can develop into a blister (like a burn, a painful pus-filled bubble) if left untreated. Preventing blisters is all about reducing friction. Follow these steps to look after your feet!

Boot fitting

- Choose boots that are half size too big, because your feet will swell during the tramp. If boots feel snug when you're fitting them they will be too tight when you're tramping in them.
- Try on potential boots with the socks you are going to walk in.
- Make sure boots are laced snugly but not too tight. They want to be laced securely around your ankle.
- Make sure your toes are not touching the end of the boots- there should be a bit of room around your toes.
- Take the boots for a spin! Have a run around, wiggle your feet, jump up and down, jump forwards and backwards, jump side to side, scuff your feet as you walk. If there is any tightness, or if your toe touches the front, change the boots.

Socks

- Always use socks that fit. Too much loose material can result in friction, while socks that are too tight can restrict circulation and cause swelling.
- Two pairs of socks can be used to create a friction barrier. A thin pair over the foot and then a thicker pair.
- Avoid cotton, it clings to the skin when wet, doesn't insulate and takes longer to dry. Wool is ideal.

Preparation

- Make sure your toenails are trimmed.
- If you have regular trouble spots (e.g. the back of your heels), consider taping them up before tramping.

On-track prevention

- If you feel a blister developing, stop and deal with it ASAP! Hot spots can be dealt with much more easily than full-blown blisters.
- Treat hot spots by covering with strapping tape, putting on vaseline, or a combination. If you don't have something to put on a hot spot, ask your instructor! They have plenty of blister prevention products.
- Change and clean socks regularly. On a short tramp you can bring a clean pair for each day. On a longer trip you may want to rinse your walking socks each evening.
- Air your feet at camp, and wash them when you have the opportunity.

Blister treatment

- For small blisters, cover with strapping tape and/or vaseline, like a hot spot.
- If blisters are seriously impeding your ability to hike:
 1. Clean with water or antiseptic swab
 2. Pop with a flame-sterilised needle

3. Apply an antiseptic cream/solution
4. Do not remove the broken skin as it provides protection for the new skin underneath
5. Cover with a dressing
6. Continue tramping

As soon as you feel a hot spot while tramping, stop the team and deal with it immediately.

IT WILL GET WORSE... GUARANTEED!