

Put Your Best Foot Forward



Janine Friedman
Esteem Wellness & Fitness
July 2011

Now that summer is here, it is the perfect time to kick back and relax. Footloose and fancy free! That's right, just kick off those shoes and begin to enjoy the fresh green grass under foot, the squishy feel of wet sand, and if you are a runner, maybe try a barefoot run.

I know what you may be thinking. How can that be? Running barefoot? Yes, absolutely! The somewhat new shift in thinking has created some serious talk on the matter, and the research will give you a *run* for your money.

Being in the fitness industry for over 20 years, I have always imparted the importance of listening to your body. Whether it be during a strength training workout, a yoga practice, or eating properly, your body gives you clues and it is your job to listen. How often have we stretched too far only to strain a muscle, or worse, injure a joint? How often do we sacrifice proper nutrition because we want to be part of the crowd? For women especially, how many times have comfort and stability been sacrificed for fashion? Particularly, with foot wear. My food for thought: get to the root of the matter. Try thinking of your feet as the roots of your body, or foundation. Without a proper, solid foundation, there is lack of balance, sturdiness, and stability. But when treated with care, issues like fatigue, plantar fasciitis and back pain may be averted.

Summer is the perfect time to create a new habit of health by beginning with your roots, or, your feet. Being barefoot every now and then will help you tune into the rhythms of Self. Cramping your feet into shoes that are too snug or overtly supportive do not give the muscles opportunity to move, react and support the body the way they were intended. While you're practicing this new way of experiencing freedom and comfort, shed the flip-flops. They only add potential for injury by changing your gait (as you curl your toes to hold onto the shoe) which results in foot, ankle, or leg pain. High heels will shorten the muscles of the calf. Which brings me back to barefoot running. Quoted by Ken Bob Saxton, veteran of 77 barefoot marathons and grandfather of the movement, "Our own feet are our best running coaches." And, don't forget to stretch either. Those sore tired feet deserve a little TLC through simple stretches and of course, a foot massage wouldn't hurt either.

Barefoot running or walking may not be for every BODY, but is definitely worth a try especially if you've experienced foot, leg, or back issues in the past. Don't you deserve to be comfortable enough to enjoy the activities you love the most? You should see your energy level soar and your mood elevate as those neglected muscles lengthen, become supple and bring you in tune with your surroundings. After all, who likes to hurt? Now how about that jog on the beach?

Janine Friedman is a Fitness & Wellness Coach, and the owner of Esteem Wellness & Fitness in Greenlawn, NY. Her extensive background in the fitness/wellness industry began in 1990 and includes a host of certifications through AFAA, IFTA, AFPA and Power Pilates. Janine's philosophy of "Movement for Mind, Body, and Soul" is a personal inspiration that she infuses into each individual client and class member she encounters. Her in-depth, hands-on knowledge of special populations has made Janine a sought-after teacher by both clients and instructors.

Janine Friedman

Esteem Wellness & Fitness

EsteemFit.com

631-651-2707

