



A Simple Method to Keep the Toes Separated and the Interphalangeal Spaces Dry

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Clinical Image

A method to keep the interphalangeal spaces dry and free of infection is presented. A rolled up Kleenex tissue is passed around the second and fourth phalanx respectively and fastened anteriorly. The most common place for foot-infections is the interphalangeal spaces and the commonest cause of foot infections is trichosis developed on the skin eroded because moisture trapped between the toes. Various methods have been developed to keep the interphalangeal space dry and free of erosion. Different toe separators have been marketed with less than optimal success. Separators made for individual interphalangeal spaces made of spongy material more often than not dislocate and usually are retrieved when socks of the wearer are removed. Separators made of silastic or other plastic materials do not absorb moisture, thus are inefficient. Separators made of elastic material are contraindicated in cases where circulation is impaired, a common situation, especially in diabetic patients (Figure 1). To overcome these difficulties and achieve absolute dry and well separated interphalangeal spaces, the following method was developed: Two tissues are rolled into 6 layer strips. The two strips are inserted in the first and third interphalangeal space respectively, and their plantar ends pulled back anteriorly through the second and fourth phalangeal space. The four loose ends of the strips, which now lay anteriorly, are taped down to the dorsum of the foot using adhesive tape of choice. The arrangement is changed or removed at bedtime. The above method was found to be free of costs and extremely effective.

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Figure 1: The application of the toe separation.