

**Celebrating our 40-year Anniversary!**



\*Ronald S. Lepow, D.P.M.

\*Randal M. Lepow, D.P.M.

\*Gary M. Lepow, D.P.M., M.S.

Brian Lepow, D.P.M.

\*Diplomates, American Board of Podiatric Surgery

**Winter 2012**

**Lepow Podiatric  
Medical Associates**

**OFFICE LOCATIONS**

*Lepow Podiatric Medical Associates  
has five locations throughout  
Greater Houston, and our  
office hours are  
8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.*

**Medical Center**

St. Luke's Medical Tower  
6624 Fannin, Suite 1690  
Houston, Texas 77030  
**(713) 790-0530**

**Downtown**

Medical Place One Building  
1315 St. Joseph Parkway  
Suite 930  
Houston, Texas 77002  
**(713) 951-5000**

**Kingwood**

Diagnostic Affiliates Building  
22751 Professional Drive  
Suite 240  
Kingwood, Texas 77339  
**(281) 348-3338**

**Southwest**

Memorial Hermann  
Southwest Professional  
Building  
7777 SW Freeway #322  
Houston, Texas 77074  
**(713) 772-9700**

**Spring**

6225 FM 2920, Suite 100  
Spring, Texas 77379  
**(281) 257-5554**

# Happy anniversary!

February 2012

As I view the calendar, I always look forward to the month of February. To me, February has consistently been a particularly outstanding month in the year, probably for a number of reasons, the obvious one being that Valentine's Day is in February, the perception that spring is "just around the corner," and of course the reality that things seem to finally settle down after the hectic holiday season.

In the midst of this February 2012, I am reflecting on another February day in 1972. That was the day I officially opened my practice of Podiatric Medicine and Surgery. It was the beginning of **Lepow Podiatric Medical Associates**, and it was a most exciting day, although I think I had only one or two patients to examine.

During the ensuing 40 years, our family practice has grown to include three brothers and a nephew providing foot and ankle care in six locations throughout Greater Houston.

Lepow Podiatric Medical Associates is a leader in providing preventive and cost-effective health care that combines state-of-the-art technology and personal caring attention.

The doctors pride themselves on utilizing the latest, most effective, and safest procedures to treat painful foot and ankle conditions.

In our opinion, being respected by one's peers is the epitome of success in medical practice. We have been honored by your expression of approval in allowing us to treat your patients. We look forward to continuing this relationship for many years into the future as our practice grows and we continue striving to provide the best foot and ankle care available in Houston.

As we celebrate the 40th anniversary of our practice, we want to thank you again for your support and friendship.

Sincerely,

*Ronald S. Lepow, D.P.M., FACFAS*

*The Doctors of Lepow Podiatric Medical Associates*

*Gary M. Lepow, D.P.M., FACFAS*

*Randal M. Lepow, D.P.M., FACFAS*

*Brian Lepow, D.P.M.*

**Thank you for all your referrals. We appreciate them!**

## “Shin splints” is such a vague term



“Shin splints” is a generic descriptive term for leg pain that occurs between the knee and ankle. It merely identifies the location of the pain, not the actual cause.

A better term would be “exercise-related leg pain,” or ERLP. ERLP can occur in many sports, but it is most prominent in distance running and track. It includes conditions such as medial tibial stress syndrome, stress fractures, tendinopathy, and chronic exertional compartment syndrome. (Don’t let the lengthy terms psyche you out.)

Pain may be present upon initiating exercise but diminishes thereafter. There might not be pain at all at the beginning of exercise, but it debuts at predictable points of the activity. Pain may subside after exercise, but then again, it may persist and become chronic, affecting all activities throughout the day. Cramping, tightness, and burning are also common complaints of ERLP. Swelling may be evident in some cases, and weakness of the muscles controlling the ankle and foot is a possible issue.

The risk factors for ERLP are not well understood. There is currently little evidence to support a widespread use of existing preventive measures. Much work remains to be done to increase understanding of ERLP.

For those already showing symptoms of ERLP, refraining from the offending activity for a while is a good start. Icing usually provides welcome relief.

Call us for an appointment if you are experiencing pain in your lower leg that continues to dog you. We can determine the cause and offer treatment, prescribe orthotics, or recommend a muscle-strengthening/stretching program.

## BUYING SHOES FOR YOUR TODDLER

Most people buy shoes to keep their children’s feet safe, warm, and dry. But a toddler’s first steps can determine their walking pattern—good or bad—into adulthood, and shoes can have a major influence on this.

Experts recommend that a child’s big toe should be approximately  $\frac{3}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$  of an inch from the inside tip of the shoe while the child is standing. Without enough space, children don’t have adequate toe movement as they step. With too much space, however, the flex point of a child’s foot won’t match the shoe’s flex point.

There’s no need for high-tops for your toddler. Ankle muscles at this age need the freedom to grow and develop on their own.

The soles should be super soft and able to be twisted every which way. You should even be able to feel your child’s toes through the material. The shoe’s material should be breathable (e.g., leather, canvas, or synthetic).

Beware of shoes marked “wide.” Make sure they actually are wider; physically check to make sure there’s space on the sides of your child’s feet. Some manufacturers just sew extra material into the side of the shoe to make it appear wider (sounds like a traveling carnival trick). At the shoe’s widest point, you should be able to grasp a bit of the material between your fingers.

Avoid hand-me-downs. The sole of a shoe develops its own memory. Any abnormalities in walking pattern will be passed on to the new wearer. Walking a mile in someone else’s shoes works figuratively, but not so much literally.





## EXERCISE and diabetes

Exercise is a key element in the arsenal to combat diabetes. Zeroing in on the feet and ankles, a flexibility program is beneficial for those suffering with the following: peripheral neuropathy, a condition that causes loss of sensation; decreased ability to properly coordinate the movements of the lower extremities; diminished range of motion; and joint stiffness.

Decreased range of motion in the ankle and foot may cause abnormalities in one's walking pattern and may negatively affect balance and cause abnormal forefoot pressure. This means a greater chance of falls and increased risk of foot ulcers.

Exercises to improve range of motion include:

- “drawing” an exaggerated alphabet with the ankle twice daily
- performing ankle dorsiflexion and plantarflexion 10 times each, twice daily (fancy terms for flexing the feet up and down, with the ankle being the pivot)
- stretching the ankle to the outside, then the inside 10 times each, twice daily
- bending the toes up and down (no fancy terms this time)
- stretching the calf muscles
- manipulating/massaging the soft tissue of the entire foot

*These exercises will also improve circulation, which will aid healing.*

Exercise regimens can be tough to maintain. Collective support (or people who will subtly get on your case) and keeping your eye on the prize are keys to success.

Always consult a physician to make sure an exercise regimen is safe before beginning. Patients are cautioned to monitor blood glucose levels before, during, and after exercise to avoid hypoglycemic or hyperglycemic events.

Balance exercises are also recommended in a protected environment—for instance, a person standing on one foot while brushing their teeth or washing the dishes. These routines can gradually progress to more challenging activities.

## Rheumatoid arthritis and its effect on feet and ankles

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a systemic disease that attacks multiple joints throughout the body. With RA, your body is subject to attack by your own immune system; instead of protecting the joints, it produces substances that attack and inflame joints.

Some are more genetically predisposed to the disease, but it usually takes a certain chemical or environmental “trigger” to activate it. Women develop RA far more often than men, and it usually occurs between the ages of 40 and 60.

Symptoms may or may not begin in the feet and ankles, but eventually these areas will be affected. Symptoms generally appear in both feet/ankles at the same time. They include stiffness, pain, inflammation, and swelling. If the ball of your foot is affected, the way you walk may be altered due to the pain, leading to corns, bunions, or hammertoes. If the back of the foot and/or ankle is involved, bones may shift position in the joints.

This can cause the arch of the foot to collapse, resulting in pain and difficulty in walking. You may also feel fatigued and feverish, and experience loss of appetite.

Rheumatoid arthritis is incurable, but it can be controlled with medication and exercise. A podiatrist is invaluable in cases of RA. A podiatrist can monitor your foot and ankle health, prescribe special shoes or orthotics to ease foot and ankle conditions caused by RA, and recommend stretches and exercises.

Surgery may be a necessity to correct bunions and hammertoes caused by RA. Fusion surgery and ankle joint replacement surgery are options for more advanced cases of RA.

Be proactive with rheumatoid arthritis. If you've been diagnosed, let our office know (even if your feet and ankles aren't currently affected). We will work in coordination with your other doctors. Rheumatoid arthritis is a serious disease, but it can be managed effectively.



## Lepow Foot & Ankle Specialists

6624 Fannin, Suite 1690  
Houston, TX 77030

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The information included in this newsletter is not intended as a substitute for professional podiatric advice. For your specific situation, please consult the appropriate health-care professional.

## Please visit our Web site!

[www.LepowFoot.com](http://www.LepowFoot.com)

When you visit our Web site, you'll be able to access important information about our practice, our services, and foot-health information.

### ➤ THE DOCTORS

Learn about the doctors of Lepow Podiatric Medical Associates.

### ➤ SPECIALIZED SERVICES

Learn about what we do in our office and community.

### ➤ OFFICE LOCATIONS

Learn where we are located and find easy directions.

### ➤ COMMON DISORDERS

Learn about foot and ankle problems and treatment options.

### ➤ NEW PATIENT FORMS

Save time completing your new patient information.

### ➤ MEDICAL STORE

Learn about medical products we recommend and how to order them.

### ➤ ANIMATIONS

See examples of surgical and nonsurgical procedures performed by our doctors.



## From the offices of Lepow Foot & Ankle Specialists

Ronald S. Lepow, D.P.M.

Gary M. Lepow, D.P.M., M.S.

Randal M. Lepow, D.P.M.

Brian Lepow, D.P.M.

### Days & Hours

Mon.	8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
Tues.	8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
Wed.	8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
Thurs.	8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
Fri.	8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Web site:

[www.LepowFoot.com](http://www.LepowFoot.com)

## FOOT FACT



**The average  
person takes  
8,000 to  
10,000 steps  
per day!**