

# The Effects of **FLIP FLOPS** on Your Body

## What should you know?

According to the National Foot Health Assessment 2012, **78% of those age 21 and older have experienced one or more foot problems in their lives.**  
To what extent are flip flops the cause of it?

### FLIP FLOP STRUCTURE

Medical experts agree that this popular summertime footwear can cause serious foot problems.

#### Ankle

Flip flops do not have straps that support around the ankle. Sprains and twists can occur more easily when wearing these shoes.

#### Heel pain

Pain along the plantar fascia is caused when there is too much strain on the main connective tissue from the heel to the toes. Pain is often described as a burning or stabbing sensation in the heel when walking.

Achilles tendon

Plantar fascia ligament

Calf muscle

Tibia

#### Straps

Health experts say the strap does not help keep the foot in the shoe.

#### Toes

One study found people tend to scrunch their toes as the heel is lifted in the air while walking. This type of movement at the wrong time in the gait cycle can lead to head, neck and hip problems.

#### Arch

Flat, thin-soled flip flops have no arch support, causing the foot to collapse and lie unnaturally flat on the shoe.

#### Lacking support

Thin, flexible soles do not provide enough cushioning for the heel.

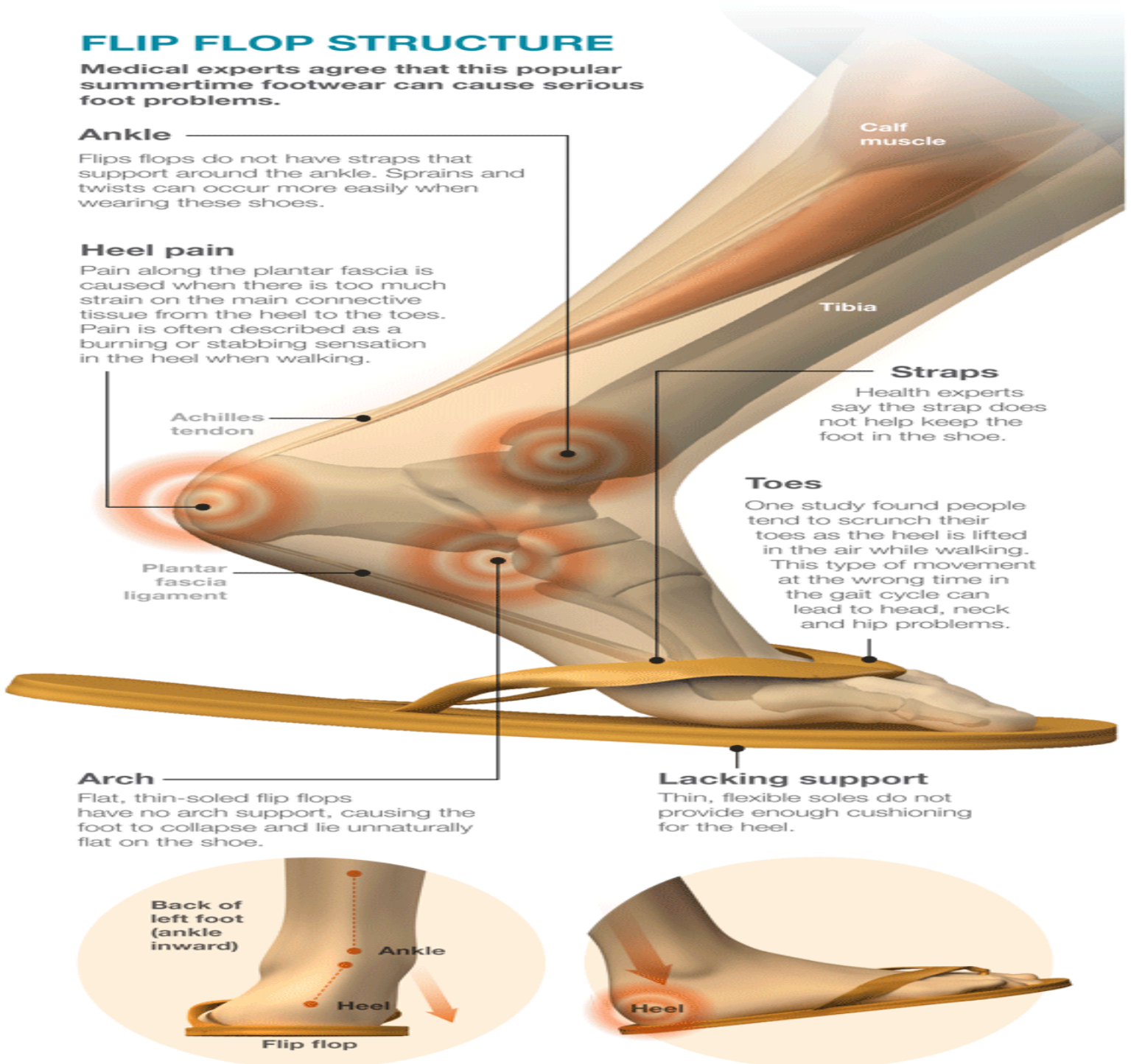
Back of left foot (ankle inward)

Ankle

Heel

Flip flop

Heel



## WALKING

Flip flop wearers take short strides and turn their ankles inward. Long-term ankle and hip problems are a cause for concern.



## A GROWING CONCERN

Heel pain is growing among young people **ages 15 to 25 years**. This is a group that normally does not have foot problems. Experts cite wearing flip flops daily as the main cause.

A recent survey showed parents blamed thong-style flip flops for **causing foot injuries for their children**.



Rearfoot injuries



Forefoot injuries

## A COSTLY MEDICAL ISSUE



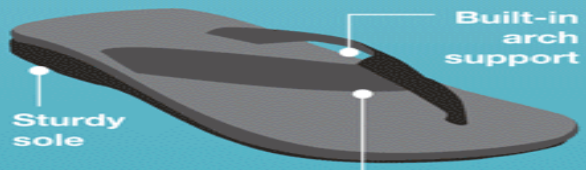
In 2012, an estimated **\$62 million** was spent treating 200,000 foot injuries caused by flip flops in the United Kingdom alone.

### Common injuries:

Foot fatigue	Heel spurs
Infections	Hip problems
Cuts/scrapes	Lower back pain
Bunions	Walking issues

## TIPS FOR CHOOSING AND WEARING FLIP FLOPS

- Choose flip flops with sturdier soles for better cushioning. Shoes of any kind should never fold in half or sideways.



High quality, soft leather straps to help prevent blisters

- Limit wearing flip flops for a short period of time, such as walking on the beach, around a pool, in locker room areas, hotel rooms or even to take out the trash.
- Never wear flip flops or leisure shoes while playing sports.
- Try not to wear flip flops while driving, as the foot can slip and the sandal can get lodged under the pedals.
- Do not walk long distances in flip flops.
- Do not ignore irritations between toes where the toe thong rests. Blisters and infections can occur from the strap.
- Use sunscreen on feet while wearing flip flops.
- Experts recommend replacing thin-soled flip flops every 3-4 months.

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Disclaimer: You should always check with your doctor or professional healthcare provider before starting or changing any medical treatment. This infographic is for general informational purposes only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice.

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