

Hot tip:  
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**SANDAL** season is here, bringing with it sore soles, tender toes and blisters galore. But whether you're wearing teetering wedges or jewelled flip-flops, looking chic shouldn't have to hurt. **CLAIRE COLEMAN** reveals clever ways to keep your sandals comfy — whichever style you pick...

## EYE-WATERING WEDGES

White leather cork-heel wedges, £45, riverisland.com

**PROBLEM:** Pressure on the ball of the foot  
**SOLUTION:** A ballet dancer's 'toekini', from £2.99, dance shops

**WEDGES** and other high-heeled shoes elevate the heel, forcing a lot of your weight forwards, which can cause pain in the ball of the foot. It's a bit like standing on tip-toes the whole time, and is exactly what ballet dancers have to do.

Their solution is extra padding under the ball of the foot. These pads, dubbed toekinis, are held in place with a strap that goes across the top of the foot, and in between the big toe and the second toe. You won't be able to wear them with strappy sandals as they would show, so they're best for shoes with a covered toe or wide band across the front.

**VERDICT:** The cheap versions are made of elastic and slippery fabric that slides around the foot. Pay a bit extra for the genuine ballet version and they definitely provide extra padding and comfort. **4/5**

## GRIM GLADIATORS

Frenzy Sandals, £26, Topshop

**PROBLEM:** Too tight across the forefoot  
**SOLUTION:** Dunk them in water

**REMEMBER** when people used to wear skinny jeans in the bath to mould them to their bodies? This works on a similar principle. Wearing your shoes, step into a bath or bucket of water for a few moments, then step out and keep the shoes on as they dry. The wet leather will give a little and the sandals will form around your feet, the perfect way to ease pain from gladiator styles with lots of straps.

But beware, water can change the colour of leather — so try a spot test first. Some experts warn that soaking could dissolve the glue holding your sandals together. If you're worried, spritz them gently with water instead. And bear in mind that water can dry out leather, so apply a leather cream when dry.

**VERDICT:** It definitely works, but it's a bit of a hassle to wander around in damp shoes as leather takes a long time to dry. **3/5**

## SANDPAPER SANDALS

Glitter-heeled sandals, £225, lkbenmett.com

**PROBLEM:** General rubbing against the foot

**SOLUTION:** Washing-up liquid

**BLISTERS** form when there is friction between the shoe and your foot, so anything that can diminish that friction will reduce the risk of blisters. For shoes like this glittery pair, with fancy straps that can't be dunked in water, you can use washing-up liquid as a lubricant. Simply put a drop on your finger and rub it around the problem areas. Or try a silk spray (£8.95, supremeshoecare.com), which contains real silk to ease friction between shoes and feet.

**VERDICT:** Washing-up liquid did work initially, but it's difficult to know how much to put on and exactly where to put it, especially as your feet do have to grip the shoes in certain places. Not really an all-day solution. **2/5**

## PAINFUL PEEP TOES

Navy slingback cork wedges, £115, russellandbromley.co.uk

**PROBLEM:** Individual toes get rubbed

**SOLUTION:** Gel toe caps, from £2.89, amazon.co.uk

**THESE** are not a solution for strappy sandals where you'd be able to see them, but if you've got a pair of peep-toe shoes which are perfect but for the agony they

# Fed up with blisters? Blast your sandals with a hairdryer

## Crafty ways to make summer shoes fit



inflict on one toe, these little gel rubber caps are the perfect answer. They slip over individual toes and provide extra cushioning. They're also good if you have a crooked toe that digs into the adjacent one. Washable and reusable, just make sure you get the right size as you want a snug fit.

**VERDICT:** These look really quite ridiculous but if you've got shoes that do cause this specific problem, they absolutely work. **5/5**

## ANKLE-BITING SHOEBOOTS

Caged heeled sandals, £39.99, zara.com

**PROBLEM:** Shoes rubbing just above the heel and below the ankle

**SOLUTION:** Nipple petals, £6, topshop.com

**SHOES** that dig in at the back or rub against the ankle are a real pain. For a pair with a thick strap across the back, you can buy blister plasters (from £3.49, superdrug.com) to put on your heels, or Scholl's heel shields (£4.99, superdrug.com) to stick in your shoes — but if you own a pair of nipple petals, they will do the job nicely. These nipple shields are more commonly used to protect your

modesty when you're wearing sheer tops and provide a thick pad for extra comfort. Made of silicone, they're sticky on one side, so you just peel off the backing film and apply to your heel. They're washable and the manufacturers say they can be reused up to 20 times.

**VERDICT:** These are brilliant, especially if you've already got the beginnings of a blister. **5/5**

## TOO-TIGHT SLIDERS

Maria embellished sandals, £16, very.co.uk

**PROBLEM:** Pinching and chaffing

**SOLUTION:** Put them on with thick socks and use a hair dryer to warm the leather and stretch it  
**SLIDE-STYLE** sandals, with a broad band across the forefoot — with or without a toe post or slingback — are everywhere this summer. But if your feet are slightly broader than normal, you might find this look too tight.

To gently expand the band, put on a pair (or two) of thick socks and put your sandals on. Then, use a hair dryer on a low heat to soften the leather to the point where it will give a little. Keep the sandals on as they cool, and then try them without the socks.

Repeat as necessary until they fit comfortably.

**VERDICT:** It's a bit of a slow and laborious process and you do want to take your time as making them too big would be a disaster, but it really does work. Avoid using on glued-on embellishments as the heat could soften glue. **5/5**

## FIENDISH FLIP-FLOPS

Luxe toe-post sandals, £89.50, russellandbromley.co.uk

**PROBLEM:** Rubbing between your toes

**SOLUTION:** Silicone toe-post protectors, from £3.99, amazon.co.uk

**IT'S** hardly surprising that flip-flops can cause untold agony. After all, the baby-soft skin between our big toe and our second toe never normally sees daylight.

Step forward silicone toe-post protectors — little pieces of clear, gel-like rubber that stick to the base of the toe-post and wrap around it, so that your toes are in contact with the softer, more forgiving gel rather than the hard leather or plastic post.

**VERDICT:** The ones we tried didn't come far enough up the toe post to protect the whole area so

the sandal still rubbed. If you can find ones which come up higher, they might work. **1/5**

## SCRATCHY FLATS

Metal plate flat sandals, £22.99, zara.com

**PROBLEM:** Being scratched by seams in the leather

**SOLUTION:** Use a nail file to rub down lumps and bumps

**IF YOU** think seams in clothes are itchy, they're nothing compared to seams in shoes. A nail file can smooth out the sharpest edges before you wear sandals. Run your finger over the inside of your shoe and, when you come across something that feels like it might dig in, gently file it.

**VERDICT:** It takes a bit of trial and error, and once you've finished it's worth smoothing a bit of leather cream over the end to get a really smooth finish. **4/5**

## HELLISHLY HIGH HEELS

Multi-strap heeled sandals, £45, riverisland.com

**PROBLEM:** Feet slide forward in very high heels

**SOLUTION:** Pedag girl anti-slip half insoles, £5.49, supremeshoecare.com

**IF YOUR** heel is considerably higher than your toe, the whole of your foot slides forward. The key is to make sure the surface under your sole is non-slip, so your feet can't slide forward. These self-adhesive half insoles sit under the front part of your foot and have a textured, grippy rubber pad that holds your foot in place.

**VERDICT:** One of those things you can't believe nobody's thought of before. You may have to play around with the positioning, but they stop you slipping forward, and provide padding. **4/5**

## The rise of sunburn art

**NEVER** has the idea that one should suffer for one's art been taken so literally, thanks to the painful trend for sunburn art that has gone viral over the past few days.

People have taken to the internet to express their creativity with patterned suntans, before sharing their images on Instagram with the

hashtag #sunburnart. From flowers to structured lines and intricate patterns, there are all sorts of designs popping up.

Dermatologists have been quick to denounce sunburn art as something that is as dangerous as normal sunburn.

Definitely a trend to resist.

