



The Institute for Preventive Foot Health ([IPFH](#)) is a non-profit foundation dedicated to helping individuals and their families care for their feet through awareness, education, research and the identification of easy-to-follow methods proven by clinical research to *prevent, treat and manage* painful conditions and diseases affecting the feet and quality of life.

According to a first-of-its-kind [survey conducted for IPFH by NPD Group, Inc.](#), a respected national research organization, a staggering 88% of adults in the U.S. have experienced foot pain or foot problems serious enough to interfere with the ability to work, exercise and/or enjoy a full, healthy lifestyle.

Foot problems often increase with age. By age 50, the average person will have walked or run 75,000 miles, primarily on hard, unnatural surfaces (concrete, asphalt and hard floors). This contributes to a breakdown of the skin and the protective fat pads that support the balls, heels and toes, the [skin/soft tissue\(s\) of the foot](#).

IPFH is dedicated to the reduction of foot pain, or its elimination, through proper foot care, footwear and biomechanics.

About Preventive Foot Health

[Preventive foot health](#) is a proactive approach to wellness that focuses on the feet as the foundation of mobility. It is necessary for all sports and regular activities - at home and at work. It is *critical* for those with chronic health conditions - diabetes, arthritis and circulatory disease - where small problems can turn into limb- and life-threatening conditions.

Origin of the Institute

Seven groundbreaking clinical studies were conducted by doctors and podiatrists between 1989 and 1993 on major conditions negatively affecting the human foot, including diabetes (causing [neuropathy](#) and ulceration), arthritis (causing pain), and [blisters](#). They found that the use of [padded socks](#), having complex design specifications beyond so-called “thick” or “cushioned” socks, *with* properly fitted shoes and inserts (if needed) significantly reduce two forces, [pressure](#) and [shear](#), that cause breakdown of [soft tissue](#).

Reduction of pressure and shear for people with diabetes can help prevent foot ulcers, lessening the risk of infection and amputation. For those with arthritis, there can be significant alleviation of foot pain. Reducing pressure and shear during exercise and sports helps prevent blisters. The use of clinically tested padded socks, properly fitted with appropriate footwear, is referred to [skin/soft tissue management of the foot](#).

The revelations that came from these clinical studies motivated Jim Throneburg, owner of THORLO, Inc., makers of the Thorlos® brand athletic socks, to found IPFH and foster its educational and research mission.

Founding Sponsors

IPFH was founded by James L. Throneburg, owner of [THORLO, Inc.](#), based on knowledge gained from groundbreaking clinical research conducted with novel padded sock designs donated by THORLO. Both Throneburg and THORLO, Inc. continue to provide financial support for IPFH and to initiate collaborative efforts with its [educational partners](#): the [Amputee Coalition](#) and the [International Council on Active Aging](#) (ICAA).