



From the Department of Orthopedics, Cleveland Clinic

What are calluses?

Calluses are a build-up of hard skin, generally beneath weight bearing bony surfaces. Calluses generally occur on the surface under the foot. Note: some degree of callus formation on the sole of the foot is normal.

What causes calluses?

Calluses are caused by an uneven distribution of weight, generally on the bottom of the forefoot or heel. Calluses can also be caused by improperly-fitting shoes or a skin abnormality.

How can calluses be prevented?

- Wear properly fitting, supportive shoes with shock-absorbing soles; avoid leather-soled shoes
- Use cushioned pads and insoles
- Limit periods of barefoot walking

How can calluses be treated?

If you have a callus, do not try to cut it or remove it with a sharp object. Instead, soak your feet first in lukewarm, soapy water and then use a pumice stone to gently remove the build-up of tissue. Use cushioned pads and insoles. Medications may also be prescribed to soften calluses.

When other treatments have not been successful, surgery may be recommended. Corrective surgery involves removing internal pressure by removing a piece of the bone or changing the position of the bone so calluses do not form.

Foot Fact: The average person takes 8,000 to 10,000 steps a day, which adds up to about 115,000 miles over a lifetime. That's enough to go around the circumference of the earth four times.