

Be Sweet to Your Feet: A Walt Disney World Planning Article

by Lynley Hipps, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Picture it -- it's a perfect day in central Florida.

It's sunny, but the humidity is low, so it's cool and comfortable. The crowds are low, and the lines are short. Your family has enjoyed a magical day at Walt Disney World; but your aching, blistered feet stop you in your tracks. The key to happy feet at Disney is to think (and dress) like a runner!

Shoes

☐ Nikes? Chacos? Crocs? Merrells? Whatever shoes you prefer, make sure they've proven themselves up to the challenge of Disney. One common piece of advice is to wear shoes that are "broken-in," but most runners will tell you that a proper-fitting pair of shoes doesn't need to be broken in. Shoes are an investment, so consider visiting a running store to be fitted for shoes. When my family visits Disney, we each take two pairs of running shoes and a pair of flip-flops or sandals. We alternate the running shoes each day and wear the flip-flops for shorter park visits or to dinner.

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☐ Socks

☐ You may not spend much time thinking about your socks, but the right socks can make a world of difference! Stay away from all-cotton socks, which will absorb sweat, and consider moisture-wicking socks to keep the sweat at bay and reduce blisters. I run in toe socks, which keep my toes from rubbing together, and I've never had a blister while wearing them. Also consider carrying an extra pair of socks in your park bag -- pop-up thunderstorms are common in Florida, especially in the summer, and slipping your feet into a nice, dry pair of socks feels great!

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☐ Anti-Chafing Products

☐ Friction is your feet's worst enemy, so anti-chafing products are their best friend. There are lots of brands available -- BodyGlide, Gold Bond, even Vaseline. My preference is Monistat Anti-Chafing Gel, which is available in the foot care aisle at Target and Walmart. Use it liberally -- all over your feet, between your toes, and anywhere else your clothes might rub, even under bra straps or elastic waistbands.

Pedicure

☐ In the frantic preparations for vacation, make time to get a pedicure. And while you're at it, schedule a pedicure for after you return home, too! At the very least, take a nailcare kit and make sure everyone's

toenails are trimmed.

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□Plan

□Given that this is the PassPorter newsletter, this seems like an obvious tip, but be sure to use your PassPorter and My Disney Experience app to plan your day! A good touring plan will help minimize criss-crossing the park and standing in line. When we visited Walt Disney World in late 2014, we pre-scheduled our FastPasses, but we had to choose the attractions first -- the app chose the times, which meant that we had to hurry to Space Mountain when we weren't quite finished in Frontierland, so we had to backtrack to hit Splash Mountain. Now that we can choose the attraction and time for each FastPass+, our February 2017 trip was much more streamlined. And don't forget to calculate the location of your Advanced Dining Reservations, too. It's quite a hike from Spice Road Table in Morocco to Mission: Space! If you are going to brave the long standby line for some of the E-ticket rides, try to hit them early in the day while your feet are fresh.

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□Take a Break

□Give your feet a break by interspersing the longer attractions and shows with the thrill rides and lines. We also like to plan a table service meal for lunch when we can -- the prices are cheaper, and by the time we're hungry, our feet are ready for a rest. Proper fueling is essential for a runner, so a well-timed Mickey Bar or Dole Whip may be just what your feet need to finish out the day!

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□Kids

□Don't forget about your kids' feet -- put yourself in their shoes! On our 2014 trip, our three-year-old's socks were dripping wet every time we took off her shoes, and her poor little feet were tender from the wet friction. #momfail! As soon as we got home, I bought her moisture-wicking socks! Be sure to slather on the anti-chafing gel, too.

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□Train

□Most of us don't log 20,000+ steps on a daily basis, so the physical rigor of Disney can really be a shock to your feet. In the months leading up to your trip, prepare your feet (and try out your new gear) by walking a few miles per week. Make it fun -- throw on your favorite Disney shirts, put on your favorite Disney tunes, and count down the days until you're in the "Happiest Place on Earth" again!

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□A trip to a Disney park is truly a marathon, not a sprint -- we logged over 40 miles in our 5-day trip in 2014. But thinking like a runner can help ensure that your feet stay happy and blister-free!

About The Author: Lynley lives in Columbus, GA (a short six-hour drive from

Walt Disney World!), with her Disney-loving husband, Bennett, and daughter, Eryn (5). Having just returned from the Superheroes Half-Marathon Weekend at Disneyland, she is looking forward to their next Disney trip for the Princess Half Marathon in February 2017.

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