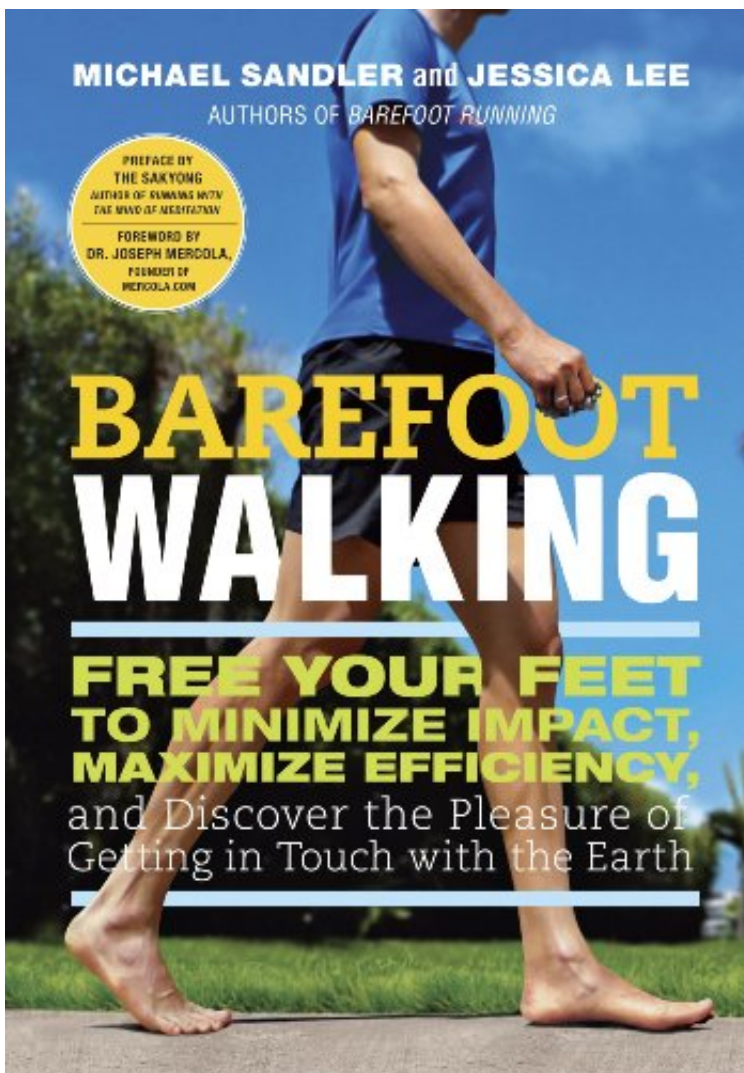


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# Barefoot Walking: Free Your Feet to Minimize Impact, Maximize Efficiency, and Discover the Pleasure of Getting in Touch with the Earth



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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurFrom the authors of Barefoot Running, the essential guide to the life-changing benefits of barefoot walkingAs the thousands of people who have fallen in love with barefoot running already know, shedding your shoes is good for the body and the soul. Barefoot Walking shows all readers, no matter their fitness level, how to take command of their physical and spiritual well-being through this simple and easy

practice, even if they are daunted by sore feet, achy joints, injury, illness, or feeling out of shape. This book contains special material for children, pregnant women, and seniors, and shows anyone how this gentle, natural activity can literally transform one's life, restoring health, vitality, strength, and balance, and improving focus, mood, memory, and more. Full of tips and tools for going bare, this is the essential handbook for people who want to move their body, connect with the earth, and feel physically and psychologically more alive.

Extrait chapter 1 Walk Your Way to Health and Happiness I only went out for a walk and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in. John Muir No matter what, we always return to barefoot walking. At our barefoot running clinics, people often ask, What do I do if I'm not ready to start running? or What if I hate running? Or they would tell us they were too weak, too old, or too heavy. For them, who were the vast majority, we would prescribe barefoot walking. It's an activity nearly everyone can do, and a kind and gentle way to exercise. It's something kids can do to grow their feet and limbs strong. It's something seniors can do to roll back the clock, gaining balance, strength, flexibility, and even greater bone density. And it's something all of us can do, even with the most hectic of schedules, to get or stay in shape and quiet our minds in the process. Walking barefoot each sunrise and sunset is where we do our best brainstorming for our books. It's where we swap ideas, feel things out, and have our greatest aha moments. You could call our barefoot walking time our lab time or our creative time. It's like a substitute for anti-anxiety medication without the side effects. Even today, if we start to get wound up, we head outside for a few minutes of barefoot walking or sitting on the ground. Both calm us and refresh us creatively. Walking barefoot could be the deep breath we all need during stressful times. And for those seeking a spiritual experience, barefoot walking truly is the greatest exercise on earth. It's hard to focus on your spiritual growth when your house (your body) is falling apart and your mind is wrapped up in thought. Barefoot walking helps your spiritual path, no matter what your religion, by helping you build a stronger foundation for your home and quiet the chatter. When you walk barefoot, you can't help but clear your mind and focus merely on your footsteps, or on the ground beneath your feet. In essence, though designed to get us from point A to point B, barefoot walking is a powerful form of meditation or prayer, whether we intend it to be that way or not. You'll gain a greater connection to your beliefs, to the earth, and to your higher power, whatever or whoever that is for you, with each and every step. You'll clear your mind and have time to breathe, to think, and to pray. Quite simply, barefoot walking is our birthright. It's something each of us was born to do and can do, and it has some dramatic health benefits. And for us personally, it was our path to healing Michael from an accident in 2006, Jessica from a foot injury in 2010, and both of us from a book tour that left us exhausted in every sense. It was only by going barefoot and going back to basics, back to walking, that we began to heal. One Foot in Front of the Other You aren't likely to set any records for long-distance walking or to push your body into being a superstar athlete with barefoot walking. Though we will set modest goals together, when they are combined these small, incremental changes will be life-changing. Our goal is to help you turn yourself into a healthy, happy human being. It's about helping you overcome your own challenges and grow, both physically and mentally. Ah, but isn't barefoot walking a strange way to grow? you ask. After all, you're just putting one foot in front of the other, right? Well, actually, that's the point. For when you put one foot in front of the other and can feel what's going on beneath your feet, something special happens. It's as if you've flipped the on switch for your body, which begins to wake up and sense what's going on. When you go barefoot and commit to a practice, you can't help but get better. Your joints heal, your muscles grow stronger, you stand taller and with better posture, your blood sugar seems to be better regulated, your body's inflammation subsides, and overall you feel much younger. And that's just a few of the physical aspects. Changes on the metaphysical level are even more dramatic. Your mind begins to quiet. In a world where we're going 24/7, being bombarded with texts, tweets, emails, and advertisements from all directions, and have more stressors and commitments than ever before, the toll on our minds is catastrophic. So if we can quiet the mind, we've gone a long way toward returning to health. For you can't have a healthy body without a healthy mind. It all begins with the mind. Your inside journey begins with a single step. When you go barefoot and feel the ground, you begin to expand your inner awareness. And that's where the real fun begins. Perhaps you've come to this book with a desire to heal, overcome injury, or cope with a long-lasting condition that's left you with poor health. Barefoot walking is a holistic, gentle way to turn your body, and therefore your health, back on. If you think of humans as being like giant trees, our health begins with our roots. For us, our roots are our feet. Start to strengthen and heal the feet, and you strengthen your roots. It's a very simple process too. We start with short exercises and even shorter strolls. The great news is it can be done anywhere, especially at your favorite places. For instance, head to your

neighborhood park or a local arboretum or botanical garden. Who knew you could heal and get in shape just by looking at the beauty all around you? As you get into barefoot walking, you will feel a revitalized sense of connection with nature. You may have heard the term nature deficit disorder. Whether you live in the cities, the suburbs, or even the country, unless you're working on a farm, chances are you've become disconnected from your natural environment. This disconnect is harmful because it can leave you lost, confused, and unsure of who you are, because since the beginning of time we came from the earth, lived on the earth, and worked as one with the earth. Now that we're driving cars, living in multistory buildings, and walking on linoleum floors, we're completely disconnected from where we came. But as you begin to feel the earth beneath your feet, you begin to reestablish that connection, to plug back into the ground, and to renew your birthright of perfect health and joy. We really were meant to dance with nature, play outdoors, and wander in the woods. It's what's healed us and sustained us for millions of years, and it's still there, beckoning us, calling us.

### Build a New Body

When Michael got into barefoot walking, he was broken, healing from a near-death accident and living with a new titanium femur and hip. He went from one overuse injury to the next. Only by feeling the ground was he able to heal. Others of you have similar broken bodies. Maybe you're overweight or obese, or struggling with an autoimmune disease or diabetes. Maybe your joints ache. Your back hurts. You suffer from migraines. Perhaps that pain in your side is a broken relationship, an ailing parent for whom you provide daily care, a cruel boss, or a devastating loss of a friend or partner. An unfulfilled life, or broken dreams. No matter what baggage you are carrying mentally and physically, barefoot walking may help you cope and recover. The most important point is that we are not our bodies. Our bodies are merely the shells that house the soul. No matter what your body is like, it's yours just for this lifetime. Then your body passes on, eventually returning to the earth (hmm, there's that earth theme again). If you believe in your mind that you can change your body, you can. Your body is a gift. Cherish it and treat it as best you can. Think of your body like an expensive car, perhaps a true collector's item, or maybe the car you've dreamed about your whole life. Chances are you wouldn't buy the car and suddenly pack it with trash, dent the heck out of it, or fill it with bad gasoline. On the contrary, you'd likely do your best to treat it well, give it the high-octane fuel it needs and the maintenance it deserves, and keep it sparkly clean. Well, that's what we need to do with our bodies too. Treat your body well, and it'll treat you well. Where the analogy with the car stops is that we can regenerate our bodies. Nearly every cell in our bodies is replaced every three to five years. You don't have the same skin cells you had even yesterday, or the same bone cells you had just a few years ago. This means you can truly transform your body into whatever you desire it to be. You can decide what type of new body you would like. When we first started our journeys, we wanted bodies that no longer felt cramped from being stuffed in a car or seated in front of a computer for too long. What are you looking for? Start building your new body by putting your two bare feet on the ground. It's as if you're plugging into a computer and downloading instructions for perfect health. For when you feel the ground, you gain awareness, and with each step you are working toward a new and improved you. Love your body, and it will love you. It's so simple. Consider the discipline or practice of barefoot walking to be like a daily dose of love. You get up, you go for a walk, and you send love to your body. Each day as you walk, you're filling it with more love and more love and reshaping it in more ways than one. When you commit to a daily routine, either walking or stretching (to promote your walk), you're giving yourself permission to heal, permission to become healthy again. No matter how far gone your health is, no matter how weak or tired you are feeling, you can make this change. All it takes is believing you can change and focusing on one gentle barefoot step at a time. As you prepare to make this change, don't focus on any negatives. Instead, see yourself walking daily. Feel the joy of connecting with the earth. Imagine the stillness and peace of mind of focusing on your breath and on the beauty all around you. And watch it come into being. The path will clear ahead.

### Feel the Earth, Free Your Spirit

When you're plugged into the earth, you're connecting with something greater than yourself. You go from a single soul of one to a community of everyone (the community of humanity). You go from an uprooted tree to one plugged into the soil with far-reaching roots connecting with a community of other trees. When you go barefoot, you're plugging back into the soil, back into the earth, and back into our global community. As Henry David Thoreau said, Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads. When you feel the earth, you can't help but see the world in a more spiritual way, because even little things such as leaves, bark, pebbles, or clouds become so much bigger and clearer. In essence, by going barefoot, it's as if you're plugging back into Source whatever that spiritual connection means to you because you're going back to the ground from which we came. How can it not be spiritual when we're feeling the beauty beneath our feet and suddenly we're looking in childlike awe and joy at the world around us? We see the beauty of a flower

again, the grandeur of the tree, the amazing wonder of the feeling of the dirt beneath our feet. We begin to see the grand design of things and how we are part of that design. To us, there's nothing more spiritual than plugging back into where we came from. Physically, that begins by going barefoot. Mentally, that begins with quieting our minds. And spiritually, that begins with the practice of letting go, surrendering, and just being. For, as the expression goes, we are human beings. Our job is to let go, to be, to learn, to grow, and to see what happens. We can have this fully human existence, be spiritual beings having a human experience, only when we let go and be in the moment. And when you are fully barefoot, when your naked feet meet the earth (our shrine, our temple), in an instant you are present. And what a beautiful instant that is! Awareness begins with your first barefoot steps, awareness of the ground, awareness of your mind, and awareness of that still, small, yet growing voice inside calling you forward. That's your soul, your higher self, reawakened by the ground beneath your feet. By going barefoot, you step through the doorway and into the temple of the great outdoors.

## 2 Why Barefoot Is Best

Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee. Job 12:8

Monday, June 6, 2011, is a day we'll never forget. After holding a weekend retreat at the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health in the Berkshires, I rushed to New York City for a whirlwind day of meetings with the top publishers in the world. Our literary agent, Stephanie, had miraculously planned ten back-to-back meetings in one day. To make each meeting on time, we'd have to walk at top speed from one corporate office to the next. But she'd mapped it out well and clocked each leg, so we were well prepared for the challenge. Tromping through Manhattan to our first meeting, however, Stephanie's feet began to ache. She wasn't wearing anything overstated or terribly disfiguring on her feet, no stilettos or pointy-toed shoes. Instead, she'd donned a tasteful open-toed dress sandal, quite appropriate for late spring meetings with execs, though perhaps a tiny bit too narrow in the toe box. But as we walked briskly down the city streets and Stephanie watched me going barefoot, she proudly declared, "Oh, what the heck!" and stripped off her shoes. And her feet came back to life. First her feet took to springing, then bouncing, and finally even bounding at times. Fortunately, Stephanie had read our first book, *Barefoot Running*, and she is also a burgeoning yogi, so she was already well practiced in barefoot movement. Even so, she was astounded by how much better her feet were feeling walking barefoot. We felt like kids, playing along the streets of New York. She was giddy with delight. Into meeting after meeting, both Stephanie and I made our entrance barefoot. It became the topic of conversation among department VPs and senior editors, some of the nicest yet toughest individuals in the city. These were often no-nonsense New Yorkers with strong ideas, traditionally not quick to change. And yet when Stephanie showed up barefoot, they soon found themselves following suit and delightfully stripped off their shoes. It was contagious.

## Presentation de l'auteur

From the authors of *Barefoot Running*, the essential guide to the life-changing benefits of barefoot walking. As the thousands of people who have fallen in love with barefoot running already know, shedding your shoes is good for the body and the soul. *Barefoot Walking* shows all readers, no matter their fitness level, how to take command of their physical and spiritual well-being through this simple and easy practice, even if they are daunted by sore feet, achy joints, injury, illness, or feeling out of shape. This book contains special material for children, pregnant women, and seniors, and shows anyone how this gentle, natural activity can literally transform one's life, restoring health, vitality, strength, and balance, and improving focus, mood, memory, and more. Full of tips and tools for going bare, this is the essential handbook for people who want to move their body, connect with the earth, and feel physically and psychologically more alive.