

This summer, march on feet of a different drummer

Feet are the great equalizer. It doesn't matter if you're big, small, short or tall. You might be a dead ringer for Gisele Bundchen or you could bear a striking resemblance to the gal in the Planter's peanuts ad. But if you've got great feet, nobody can take that away from you. Well, nobody except Old Man Winter.

Now that the days have started to warm up, it's time to start kicking off your heels. But if yours look anything like mine, the long, cold hibernation hasn't been kind to them. That's why I'm obsessed with anything that promises to save my soles.

The problem with these claims is that nine times out of 10 the "miracle products"



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are overblown while the results are underwhelming. Consider this a personal guide to the best foot finds out there.

I cannot overstate my love for the Microplane foot file. Yes, it's a splurge (\$21.99 at Bed Bath & Beyond), but it's worth every cent. My only question is why the folks at Microplane (of razor-sharp-cheese-grater fame) took so long to dream this up. I also love Artemis Woman's heel smoother (\$29.95 at Target, Wal-Mart and Rite Aid). It runs on two AA batteries, which means zero elbow grease. Even better, the company donates 2 percent of its profits to support alternative treatments and screenings for women's cancers.

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SwitchFlops, \$32 for base, \$10 for each additional strap. The Grasshopper Shop in Bangor, Smiling Cow in Camden, Country North Gifts in Houlton and Country Creations in Presque Isle.





(Clockwise from lower left): Microplane foot file and cream, \$21.99 at Bed Bath & Beyond; Bee-Ewe-Tiful Baby Balm, \$5, www.naturallybee-ewe-tiful.com; Foot Petals PediFume and SweatyPedi, \$18.95 each at www.footpetals.com; Foot Petals Tip Toes, \$6.95, Bath & Body Works; Artemis Woman heel smoother, \$29.95, Target, Wal-Mart and Rite Aid

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To follow up after either of these buffers, I like the Bee-Ewe-Tiful Baby Balm from Houlton-based Naturally Bee-Ewe-Tiful. It's the lightest, most deeply moisturizing product I've ever used — and it won't make your skin feel greasy. As its name suggests, it'll leave your heels as soft as a baby's bottom — and the \$5 price tag will knock your socks off (www.naturallybee-ewe-tiful.com).

Don't worry — you shouldn't be wearing socks in May anyway. But you should be wearing Foot Petals. These cute little pads were created for people who want all of the pleasure — and none of the pain — of sky-high strappy sandals. In addition to reducing foot stress, the Tip Toes prevent your feet from slipping in your shoes, which, in turn, prevents "toe overhang" — a phenomenon anyone who has worn high-heeled sandals knows all too well (\$6.95, Bed Bath & Beyond).

Now, I know you have stunning, envy-inducing feet. And I'm not implying that

they'd ever smell like anything other than rose petals or morning dew. But if, for some strange reason, they do, Foot Petals also makes lavender-vanilla scented PediFume cooling gel and SweatyPedi spray (\$18.95 each at www.footpetals.com).

Of course, your feet are going to look so good in a pair of SwitchFlops, nobody will really notice anything else. These adorable flip-flops with interchangeable Velcro straps were dreamed up by a Florida high school student. They cost \$32-\$37 for the base model and \$10 for each additional strap, and they're available at The Grasshopper Shop in Bangor, Smiling Cow in Camden, Country North Gifts

in Houlton and Country Creations in Presque Isle. It's like having 10 different pairs of shoes in one — and who doesn't love that idea?

That way — even if you're having a bad hair day, your jeans don't fit and you woke up with a giant zit on your nose — you can still step out and style.

ShopGirl would love to hear from you. Send questions, comments or tips by e-mail to kandresen@bangordailynews.net, or by U.S. Mail to Bangor Daily News, attn: ShopGirl column, 491 Main St., Bangor, ME 04401. Visit the ShopBlog at <http://community.v1.bangornews.com/blog/4>.

WIN ME!

Treat your feet with a collection of great products and a fabulous pair of SwitchFlops, women's size 7, in brown. For details on how to enter — and ShopGirl's picks for spring's best toenail polish shades — visit the ShopBlog at <http://community.v1.bangornews.com/blog/4>. Readers without Internet access can send their name, address and phone number to: ShopGirl Giveaway, Bangor Daily News, P.O. Box 1329, Bangor, ME 04402-1329. The winner will be announced in the May 31 ShopGirl column.

