



TEN TORS @ PCSC



BLISTERS

Blisters are swellings filled with liquid under the top layer of your skin. A blister usually forms because the outer layer of the skin has been damaged. Fluid then collects to cushion & protect the tissue underneath and allows the blister to heal. Blisters can be filled with a clear liquid, blood and sometime pus (if they become infected). Most blisters last about 3 to 7 days and heal naturally, however if you are to continue activity they need to be well protected.



What causes blisters?

Blisters are caused in several ways; the one which concerns us most is friction to the skin. If your skin is rubbed for long enough, a blister will form, however short periods of intense rubbing can also cause a blister, this rubbing can be caused by many things. Blisters form more easily on moist skin or in warm conditions; it is therefore very important to have spare socks and try to keep your boots dry (I know this is not always possible).

How do you prevent blisters?

I would always recommend trying to prevent blisters, rather than relying on a cure. If you know you are prone to blisters or if you feel like you're starting to get one then stop and sort it out.

Minimizing friction against your skin is the principle to preventing blisters and there are several ways to do this:

- Wear comfortable, well-fitting shoes that you have broken in prior to wearing on a hike. When buying shoes, try them on towards the end of the day when your feet are tired and therefore swollen.
- Try and ensure all seams are flat inside the boot and your boots are dry
- Keep your feet dry (blisters are more likely to develop on moist & warm skin)
- Clean Socks - If you have sweaty feet, wear moisture-absorbing socks, choose soft wicking fabric such as coolmax (NO cotton)
- Wearing two pairs of socks to ease friction against foot - normally one thin pair and one thicker pair
- If you are prone to blisters protect the potential 'hot spots' by applying a second skin, blister plaster and/or taping
- If you feel a hot area on your foot, stop immediately and protect the area.
- A highly effective but short term measure is cover the foot and affected area in petroleum jelly. This should provide instant relief from pain but as the heat from the foot melts the petroleum jelly will become ineffective.

How can you treat blisters?

You can leave tiny unbroken blisters alone to heal, because the skin covering the fluid is the best protection that a blister has against infection. However, if your blisters are large and painful, you should do something about it.

Draining your blisters:

It's best to leave your blister alone if you can, however if you need to continue walking you may need to drain the blister.

- Sterilize a needle
- Wash the affected area, make a small hole on the edge of the blister using the sterilized needle and gently drain the blister of the fluid. (A tissue/cotton wool is sometimes useful at this point)
- Apply some antibiotic ointment onto the area in order to minimize the risk of infection
- Protect the area using one of the below method

How to protect the area:

- [Compeed](#)
- [Moleskin](#)
- [Second Skin](#)
- [Blister Plaster](#)
- [Taping](#)

Important notes:

- Do not drain a blood blister
- Do not remove the flap of skin over the blister. This will serve as a protection for the growing skin underneath it
- If the fluid that comes out of the blister is milky white, yellowish, or greenish, then that is a sign that your blister is infected. Other signs of infection include warm and red skin and the formation of red streaks around the blister. If you experience these, see a doctor immediately and he/she will recommend some medications for it.
- If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us, and if have any worries about blisters when out on a hike we are happy to help.
- Most importantly if you are prone to blisters PREPARE prior to leaving on the hike and if you think you may have a blister STOP and do something about it!