

Time Out

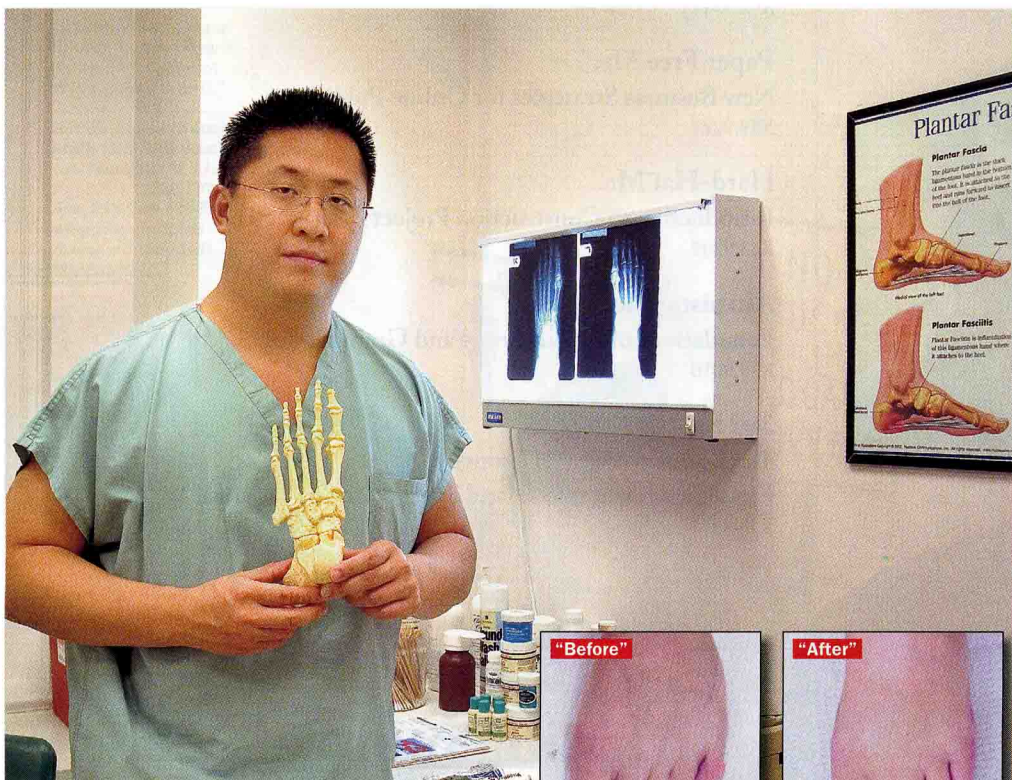
New York

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Flaying footsies

A cosmetic surgeon encourages us to obsess over yet new affliction: “toe-besity.”



There's a new disease on NYC's radar: "Toe-besity," or fat-footedness, is running rampant among self-diagnosing would-be stiletto wearers. Luckily for those with heavy hooves, there's **Dr. Oliver Zong**. Upon examining your pudgy digits, the podiatric physician might prescribe a "toe-tuck," a "foot makeover" or the antithetically named "foot face-lift." "I started doing these procedures for people with congenitally fat feet," explains the doc. "Those are the people who never take their shoes off because they're extremely embarrassed. Some might think it's just an aesthetic thing, but it can be traumatic." Those with less serious

conditions started to seek out Zong, and now the 37-year-old has more clients than he can handle. "It's a cultural shift—people have become obsessed with their feet because of things like *Sex and the City*: I have women coming in with Manolos saying, 'My foot, this shoe: Make it work.'"

The procedures used by Zong existed previously (think bunion removal) but they've been modified for cosmetic aims. Requests range from excising fat from a plump toe and shortening a too-long digit to taking it off altogether: "I had somebody ask if I'd remove her fifth

toe. She was like, 'If you just cut this off I'll be able to wear whatever shoes I want.' I said, 'No, you're insane, I'm not doing that.'"

When asked if he feels responsible for feeding the foot-conscious craze, Zong hesitates. "In a way," he says. "You can either wear the shoe that fits the foot or make the foot fit the shoe. And we're seeing a lot of people choose the latter."

—Kate Lowenstein

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