No shoes? No problem, barefoot movement adherents say

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The snow is coming.

But that doesn’t bother Zadie Taylon. She’ll face the coming winter the way she faces any other day: without shoes.

Taylon has been barefoot all of her life, but her shoeless lifestyle is becoming increasingly more popular as more people are joining the "go barefoot" movement.

As a growing trend, people are choosing to ditch their shoes and travel around public with bare feet. Some people do it for a specific cause, others choose to because it helps them feel more connected to the earth, because it renews their energy, or simply because, for them, it’s more comfortable than wearing shoes.

Heidi Fiscus began “barefooting” in June of 2013 and advocates her new lifestyle through her blog "Barefoot and Paleo." According to Fiscus, the number of users accessing her blog has increased 370 percent since January.

"I get questions about how to start all the time," Fiscus said.

Through personal research, Fiscus concluded shoes hurt her feet more than they help. Going barefoot has made her foot placement more “natural," she said.

“You will be shocked to see how the shoe completely changes the way the foot is placed on the ground,” Fiscus said.

Last winter Fiscus wore moccasins but, after one week, she began to have back pain. She ditched the shoes and her pain disappeared.

“I would rather walk through snow than wear shoes and be in pain,” Fiscus said.

Jason Rockwood, a foot and ankle surgeon, has seen several patients that choose to be barefoot. He believes that the trend is growing mainly out of popularity, and because it's the "latest thing to do."

According to Rockwood, the benefits are very limited.

"We do not live in an environment that is conducive to bare feet," he said. "We are used to wearing shoes and our feet are not accustomed to the terrain."

For Fiscus, the decision to not wear shoes has been "super healthy" for both her and her children who she lets "play in dirt, get dirty, lay on floors, touch floors" and more to build a stronger immune system.

The only difficult part for people who decide to walk barefoot is how society treats them. Taylon and Fiscus have both felt weird stares and heard snide remarks made by people who see them without shoes during their day.
“Someone once told me, 'I hope you get ringworm,'” Taylon said.

Ficus has gone so far as to get a letter from a local health department in response to a restaurant that said its "no shoes" policy was a matter of public health.

Zadie Taylon has had similar situations when walking into businesses but said she doesn't “put up a fight.”

“It is their rules and I am going into their area,” Taylon said. "Usually I keep a pair in my bag just in case they do ask for me to put on shoes.”