



Alison Dalli felt it was a great opportunity to do Podiatry 25 years ago, and she never looked back. Alison loves healthcare and specialises in a particular body part, so Podiatry perfectly matches her.

Alison has built an excellent reputation over the years and now practices out of two great clinics, Campbeltown and Paralowie.

According to Alison, good communication is one of the critical skills you need in podiatry. “In private practice, you really have to like dealing with people; after all, the feet are attached to a person!” Says Alison. Your treatment skills are essential in podiatry, especially when you are the face behind the business. The rapport you build with your patients keeps them returning and referring their friends and family to you, Alison Reiterates.

Reflecting on all the cases she has treated throughout her career, Alison spoke about a regular patient who came in looking unwell. He said he had been breathless for a few days and was not feeling good. He thought that the dust had set off the breathlessness in a recent hotel room he had stayed in. This did not sound right to me, so I questioned him a bit further regarding his symptoms and was certain that he was likely suffering from heart failure. I told him to go directly from my room to an emergency. He called me a couple of days later to thank me for basically saving his life! He had listened to my advice and was admitted to the hospital immediately and had a pacemaker inserted.

Alison said she sees a lot of cracked heels at this time of year (summer) due to people wearing open-back footwear in the hot, dry climate that we have in Adelaide. If I know in advance that a patient is coming in to see me with this problem, I will always advise them to soak their heels for 15 minutes in warm water before they come in. This makes such a massive difference in how easily the callused skin comes away and how comfortable the procedure of removing that skin is both for the patient and myself. The end result is much better. I’ve found that if the patient has not been able to soak their feet, then pre-swabbing the heels with Hydrogen Peroxide (I let it

settle in while I cut their nails and attend to any other skin issues) is a great way to soften their skin. Of course, at the end of their treatment, I always send them away with a tube of Ureabalm 25 and strict instructions for nightly use to prevent this problem from recurring. I do get a lot of satisfaction in treating callused and cracked heels. The difference you can make as a podiatrist in 20 minutes is incredible!

To make the world a better place, Alison thinks education is the key to letting other health professionals, GPs, dermatologists, physios, chiros, etc. about the services podiatrists can offer their patients and how we can work with them to enhance patient outcomes. GPs often have very little idea of all of the services that podiatrists can offer their patients (aside from routine foot care and diabetic foot screening). A GP is often the first port of call when someone is having problems with their feet, and GPs are taught very little at med school about foot problems that podiatrists are experts at treating. As a profession, we are missing out on many opportunities to have clients referred to us simply because it is not clear to many other professionals what we can offer.

As a business owner and sole practitioner, Alison expressed that her most challenging aspect is striking the perfect balance between work and life and avoiding burnout. I've found that if I limit my consulting time to 6 hours a day, I can still leave work energised enough to go home and tackle my duties as a mother of two. It's essential to have enough "in reserve" to be still able to commit time to your family and, of course, to yourself, to eat well, exercise, and have some leisure time.

Alison has recently introduced a laser into her practice as an adjunct to the arsenal of techniques that she has developed over the years for treating fungal nail infections.

Ureabalm 25 is Alison's favourite product. She says it is economical and effective, and the patients keep coming back for more.

Alison said good habits are key to life; she said, "Because I am a "one man band", I am the podiatrist, the receptionist, the bookkeeper, etc., for my podiatry practices. I'd say that routine and forming good habits are really integral to keeping on top of everything to prevent becoming overwhelmed. With a good routine and consistent habits, I manage to stay on top of my workload, my home life and my self-care and I rarely feel like it's all too much. So, I guess my life routine is very scheduled. The book 'Atomic Habits' by James Clear really helped me to refine and focus my efforts. I think if you lead a busy life and want some good tools to help you feel more in control, this book is a must-read."