

## The 'reach your feet file'

### Empowering patients with a safe and effective alternative to nail cutting

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The idea of a long-handled foot file came to me shortly after qualifying from the Northampton College of Podiatry in 2004. At the time I was working as a locum for the NHS covering a foot health assistant's caseload. This job entailed only cutting toenails with a patient every 15 minutes. Most of the patients were low risk and others simply could not reach their feet due to stiffness, surgery, obesity etc.

I began asking patients if they would prefer to cut their own toenails if they had the tools to do so. The vast majority said they would.

I scanned the internet for such a product but could not find anything. This encouraged me to play around with ideas and eventually came up with a design that I felt would work well. I

was convinced that this was a marketable item that would help the problem of patients unable to pay for qualified help to cut their nails.

It could give both private and NHS patients the ability to manage their own toenails for longer. This could reduce their visits for an important foot health check with a podiatrist from the usual six or eight weeks to every 12 weeks.

I approached Bailey Instruments Ltd, whom I knew were receptive to launching new ideas into the podiatry market with a specification.

The project was more involved than anticipated involving selecting the appropriate materials, abrasive and dimensions. A period of lengthy product development and user testing followed resulting in the production of a versatile and durable device.

It is easy to use, requiring limited skill and movement but delivering excellent results.

Under professional guidance this new product should help deliver safe and cost-effective self-management of nail care for our patients.

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