

Maxim Hurwicz

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GETTING BACK TO NORMAL

By Maxim Hurwicz

Use your brains and listen to your body.
Think about what you read and
only do what makes sense to you.

I am not a doctor or any sort of medical professional. I make no warranty whatsoever that anything I have written is accurate. I offer absolutely no assurance that any statement contained or cited in my writings touching on medical matters is true, correct, precise, or up-to-date. Even if a statement made about medicine is accurate, it may not apply to you or your symptoms.

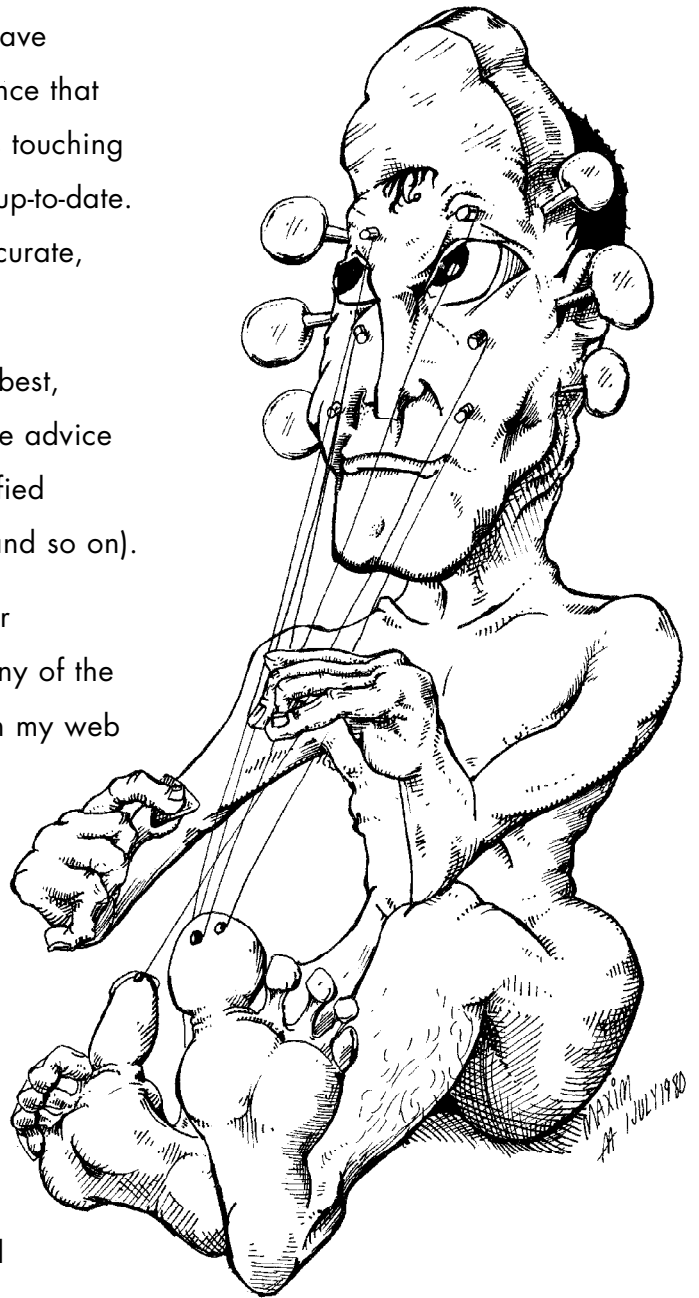
The medical information provided by me is, at best, of a general nature and cannot substitute for the advice of a medical professional (for instance, a qualified doctor/physician, pharmacist/chemist, nurse, and so on).

I cannot take any responsibility for the results or consequences of any attempt to use or adopt any of the information presented in my writings here or on my web site. I encourage you to be skeptical, to use your brains and listen to your body.

There are more cautions elsewhere in this book, please read them. I want you to be gentle with yourself.

Nothing I have written should be construed as an attempt to offer or render a medical opinion or otherwise engage in the practice of medicine. This is just the story of my personal experience...do yourself a favor and take your own advice, make your own decisions and follow them. That way you get to live your own life instead of someone else's! Life is for learning.

GETTING BACK TO NORMAL



*Don't let anyone
pull your strings...*

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If you bought this book, thank you!
Your support make projects like this possible!

If you got this book "free" from someone, please go to www.maximpulse.com and buy a copy for your own use. It's cheap! A few bucks. And I took a long time and spent a ridiculous amount of money doing the research to create this book. Think about how much time and money and suffering you saved by avoiding bogus treatments.

How did this happen?

"Jock itch" or "athlete's foot" are both terms to describe the same fungal infection.

A "fungal infection" just means there more fungus than is healthy.

Fungus is always around. Fungus is OK as long as it doesn't take over.

No fungus at all means no cheese or beer, no penicillin, and no composting so dead wood piles up in forests. Mushrooms are a fungus you can actually see. The tiny, invisible fungus on you eats dead surface skin.

Normal skin has oils that fight off the fungus so it doesn't take over.

Having a fungal infection means something isn't normal.

At some time you had healthy skin.

- It had some natural oils.

- It was clean.

- It got enough air circulation to evaporate sweat.

- It was slightly acidic.

- Any fungus present was no problem because it was limited.

Normal skin makes an environment where funguses can't grow like mad.

Here's one way you can wind up with a jock itch or athlete's foot problem:

You sweat.

- The sweat doesn't evaporate properly.

- A dark, warm, moist environment is created.

- The fungus multiples...creating a smelly slime that itches.

You wash off the sweat with too much harsh soap.

- The protective natural oils are removed.

- Your skin becomes more alkaline (less acidic).

Your skin gets scaly (lack of oils) and rubs against other skin or your underwear.

- Your skin gets cracked.

- Chaffing wears your skin away and creates raw spots.

- Scar tissue gradually builds up.

You scratch, making more cracks, rawness and scar tissue.
Bacteria invade the raw spots making infections that hurt.
The fungus multiplies like mad because it likes warm, moist, dark places...
plus it can hide out in all the cracks and scar tissue.
You try washing, scratching, scrubbing and make it all worse.
You have created a great neighborhood for fungus to grow up in.
You get some cream or spray
and kill off some of the surface fungus,
and feel better temporarily.
The fungus comes back because your skin is still not normal.
The fungus is happy. You are miserable.

How to get back to normal:

Kill off the overgrowth of fungus in a way that is gentle to your skin.
Eliminate itching so you don't scratch.
Clean your skin in a way that doesn't remove all the natural oils.
Create a low moisture environment with air circulation.
Wear clothes that let your skin breathe.
Let your skin recover and grow back.
Gently remove the dead scar tissue.
And your skin is back to normal.

The fungus is always around

The Mayo Clinic says "The organisms that cause jock itch thrive in damp, close environments. Warm, humid settings that promote heavy sweating — thus washing away fungus-killing oils, making the skin more permeable and more prone to infection — favor its spread." <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/jock-itch/DS00490/DSECTION=risk-factors>

In plain english that means if your skin is sweating a lot it loses its natural oils that kill fungus. This makes it possible for the fungus to multiply and dig in.

But it isn't only sweating that can rob your skin of the natural oils that protect it. Harsh soap or too much soap and hot water removes those oils, too. By being "too clean" you can be your own worse enemy.

And, of course, sweating provides the moisture the fungus needs to prosper.

You have probably been told you can catch athlete's foot or jock itch from someone else. Or from a shower floor. Or from a towel.

That's only half true. Towels, socks, and underwear that contact the fungus can transmit it to the next person to touch it. You can also spread it by touching your athlete's foot and then scratching your chin (yes, you can get a fungal infection in your beard). Or scratch your groin and then under your breasts. Or you can scratch an infected pet and then scratch your groin. But, and this is a big "but", the fungus will only grow in a suitable environment.

When I found myself with a fungal infection (jock itch), I just wanted it gone. While I was researching and trying this or that remedy, I reflected on why I had gotten infected. My partner didn't have any symptoms; I wasn't going to a gym; I have my own separate shower; I wasn't wandering around public swimming pools; I wasn't sharing towels and I certainly wasn't sharing clothes. I figured out that in my case I was washing with bar soap too much, and wasn't really keeping my groin dry. The soap removed the natural oils and the moisture made for a great fungal breeding ground. The fungus had been lurking around and simply took over when conditions were right for it.

It's the same with your fungal infection.

Funguses are always around.

You created an environment that allowed it to take over.

You didn't really "catch it" or "get it" from anyone.

The good news is you can create a new environment where the fungus can't take over.

What I'm trying to say is there's no use blaming anyone else. Nobody did anything to you. When you take responsibility for your life and your skin you have a chance to get control of your life. And when you have control, you can choose to feel good.

The treatment I am sharing with you is for people who were normal, but are now experiencing a fungal infection. This treatment is all about getting back to normal.

However, if you have a compromised immune system, or have a genetic disease, you may still wind up seeing a doctor. But even if that is the case, you will know how to keep the fungus numbers down to a minimum.

The 3 steps for getting rid of jock itch

This worked for me and, if you follow the steps, it will get rid of your jock itch and athlete's foot, too.

I'll describe treating athlete's foot and jock itch at the same time because they are the same fungus, just in two different places on your body.

Follow these directions, don't skip any steps, and your fungal infection will go away.

It isn't a magic pill. You actually have to do something, but the treatment is easy. I know when I had jock itch, I was willing to do almost anything to get rid of it.

While I have not suffered any ill effects whatsoever from this treatment, I would suggest that when you are trying anything new on your precious skin, you experiment on a small area first. Millions of people have used hydrogen peroxide, borax and miconazole spray powder safely but there's always the chance you will be the rare exception.

Please don't get creative and add anything to this treatment. Some things you might add, like creams, can prevent this treatment from working. Some things, like bleach, can harm you. I can't list all the things you might add, but try this treatment plan as described and you will have the best chance at eliminating the fungus and getting back to normal, healthy skin.

Step 1. Quick relief (kill surface fungus and eliminate itching while your skin heals)

Step 2. Kill off hidden fungus and remove dead scar tissue

Step 3. Maintenance (keep it from coming back)

The treatment is the same for jock itch and athlete's foot except with athlete's foot there's the extra step of soaking your feet.

This same fungus can invade any warm, moist, dark place on your body. Some women get fungal infections and itchiness under their breasts. You can follow the directions for jock itch to treat that area, too. Also, there are pillows you can get to lift your breasts off your chest at night so your skin can breathe. Google "breast pillow".

If your armpits are red and itchy, you can treat them, too. If your beard itches, treat that at the same time, too. But don't get borax in your eyes and don't eat it, for gosh sakes. Borax can irritate your eyes, so if it accidentally gets in your eyes, rinse with lots of cool water.

Important note: if this treatment doesn't work in a week or two, either you aren't following directions, or maybe what you have isn't the fungus that causes jock itch and athlete's foot. In that case, go see a doctor to find out what's really going on. Most of the itch relief comes in the first few days, so you will soon know if this treatment is helping.

Now you need to get some supplies and then you can start getting back to normal.

Supplies you'll need

Here are your weapons. It's all pretty cheap stuff you can buy in a store near you. You may have some of it already.

Shopping List

- ___ 20 Mule Team Borax (4 lb. 12 oz. box)
Walmart is generally a dollar cheaper than Target on borax
- ___ Hydrogen Peroxide (32 oz bottles)
(buy 2 for jock itch, 5 or 10 for athlete's foot)
Walmart and Target have the best prices,
smaller drug or grocery stores prices are higher.
- ___ Liquid soap or body wash
Dial liquid soap
Olay Quench Body Wash
Irish Spring Clear Body Wash
Look for coupons and sales to save money
Walmart and Target have the best prices,
smaller drug or grocery stores are higher.
- ___ Talcum powder
Ingredients: Talc, Fragrance (not corn starch)
- ___ Spray powder with 2% miconazole nitrate
Lotrimin or Ting brand
Ting is half the price of Lotrimin
See "Choosing a spray powder" for prices and sources
- ___ Blow dryer/Hair dryer
- ___ Empty, clean container(s) with caps
Gallon milk jug or a couple 2-liter bottles
- ___ A Ziploc bag
- ___ Container (to soak feet in)
12 or 15 quart plastic "sweater box" works well
- ___ Boxer shorts or boxer briefs
- ___ Soft wash clothes
- ___ Laundry detergent
- ___ Clean socks
- ___ Clean shoes that breath
- ___ Optional: a shoe dryer — see page 12 (for athlete's foot)

Details about supplies

Borax (\$3 - \$4 a box)

Borax is a mineral that has been used for cleaning clothes for a long time. If you use it correctly, borax kills off the fungus without harming your skin. By initially using both an anti-fungal spray and borax the fungus won't stand a chance.



Hydrogen Peroxide (about \$1 a quart)

Buy a couple quarts to treat jock itch. If you're treating athlete's foot buy a bunch, like 5 or ten quarts because you use it when you soak your feet.

You're going to mix the hydrogen peroxide with borax and water. The hydrogen peroxide helps the borax to soak deeper into your skin where the fungus hides. You buy 3% hydrogen peroxide at the store and then water it down. Don't use it at full strength. 1% is just right. In low concentrations, it helps new skin grow (your body actually produces hydrogen peroxide). But in high concentrations it can kill your cells...so stronger is not better.



Mild liquid soap or body wash (\$3 - \$4)

Choosing the right soap is important! Using the wrong kind of soap may be part of why you have a fungal problem.

Dial or Olay or Irish Spring liquid soap or body washes are OK. Even Johnson's Baby Shampoo is OK. Avoid anything with words like "Icy Blast" or "Winter" as they may irritate your skin. I suggest Dial liquid soap because that's what I used, so I know it's mild and you can get it anywhere. See the sections "Choosing and using soap" and "Table of soaps and their pH" for what brands to choose (and what to avoid).



Soap's job is just to wash off accumulated surface crud. It really doesn't matter if the label says "antibacterial" or not. We are out to kill funguses, but you want to preserve the natural oils your skin produces that kills off the fungus. So use only a nickel or quarter-sized amount to wash your groin (or your feet). Too much soap removes too much of the natural oils.

Regular bar soaps can strip away natural oils and leave your skin unprotected. Un-oily skin cracks and that makes more places for the fungus to hide. Using bar soap makes things worse. Using gentle liquid soap is better. Brand names like Dial or Olay may cost a bit more, but even a small bottle will last a long time. Just don't use bar soap or dish washing liquid.

Talcum powder (\$2 or \$3)

This helps keep your skin dry and it acts like a lubricant. Make sure the ingredients include talc (NOT corn starch). Both the generic powder and brand names ingredients read "Talc, fragrance".



Spray powder with 2% miconazole nitrate (\$3 to \$10)



Miconazole nitrate kills fungus, parasites and some bacteria. It will help slow the fungus down. Alone, it won't cure it, but it will help your skin to heal. Whether it's called "jock itch spray powder" or "athlete's foot spray powder" but it's all pretty much interchangeable. Look for "Active Ingredient: 2% Miconazole Nitrate". And make sure it says "spray powder", not "spray liquid".

I use Ting brand because it lists aloe vera gel as its major ingredient and is half the price of other brands.

Price vary a lot, so see the section "Choosing a spray powder" for more information about prices and sources.

All have directions saying you can use them for 4 weeks to treat athlete's foot and 2 weeks to treat jock itch. When used in small doses, no common side effects have been reported with Miconazole Spray.

A blow dryer (\$8 and up)

You need to keep your skin dry. Funguses can't grow where it's dry.

After showering you'll be using a hair dryer to dry your groin and/or feet. When you use it, keep it moving around. It's the moving air that does the trick. Don't cook yourself.



Miscellaneous

- An empty gallon jug you can seal, like a clean empty milk jug or a couple 2-liter bottles. These are to store the borax-peroxide solution.
- A Ziploc bag (for storing borax powder)
- Something to soak your feet in (athlete's foot only) In the photo I'm using a 12 quart storage container and two quarts of the borax-peroxide solution. You can see my feet are completely covered. By using a container that is just a bit larger than my feet, it minimizes the amount of liquid required to cover my feet. If you put a towel or rug underneath, the solution stays warm longer.



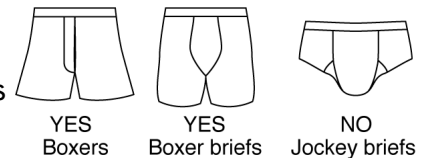
Clothing and laundry

The general idea is to avoid wearing tight or sweaty clothes and to kill off fungus. So that means choosing loose clothing, changing clothing at least daily and washing anything that has touched the fungal infection area with hot water, detergent and borax. This is one area where I think it is better to go overboard for a while...when in doubt, toss it in the laundry.

Even though I am free of my jock itch, borax stills goes in our laundry. It actually makes clothes cleaner by softening the water. Plus it saves money by not needing to use as much detergent. And the worrywart in me likes that it carries on killing off fungus.

Loose clean underwear (especially for jock itch)

Wear loose underwear for good air circulation to evaporate sweat. I like Hanes boxer briefs but regular boxers are fine, too. Don't wear jockey briefs or a jock strap because they can chaff your skin and make things worse. If you want to go commando with no undies (no illustration of this), that's fine, but you'll have to change to a clean pair of pants every day.



Clean socks (especially for athlete's foot)

Choose cotton socks that wick moisture away. Don't wear thin synthetic socks. Wear clean socks every day. Change them more often if you have sweaty feet.

Soft wash clothes

Microfiber towels are great because they are gentle and cheap. But you can cut up an old t-shirt and use that instead. You'll use a clean wash cloth each time you shower so you'll need a few. The wash cloth is only to apply the anti-fungal solution of borax and hydrogen peroxide we will be mixing up. Do not scrub with the wash cloth.



Laundry detergent and borax

Any detergent will do. But you need to wash all clothes that have contacted the fungal infection. This especially means towels, underwear, socks and sheets. Wash your laundry in hot water with 1/2 cup detergent and 1/2 cup borax. Borax kills funguses and helps detergent to clean better. Don't wear clothes that touch the itchy area two days in a row. Wash your sheets every three days for the first few weeks. Or you can put a towel down where you sleep and change that every few days.



Shoes (especially for athlete's foot)

You need to wear shoes that breath and not let your feet stay sweaty. If you have athlete's foot, spray your feet with the miconazole powder. Spray the insides of your shoes, too. If your feet get sweaty, change your socks and re-spray your feet.



You can clean and disinfect the inside of your shoes with a wash cloth wetted with the borax-peroxide solution. Don't soak your shoes, just wipe them out. Make sure to dry them thoroughly before wearing them. You can throw them in the dryer or blow dry them or buy a shoe dryer (see below). You can rotate pairs of shoes so they get a chance to dry between wearings. Maybe it's time for new shoes (inexpensive canvas type tennis shoes tend to breath especially well).

Lamb's wool You can get lamb's wool and put it between your toes so they can breath better. Amazon sells a 3/8th ounce package for under \$3 (plus \$2 shipping) that will go a long way. You can use it plain or spray it with the miconazole powder. Apply clean wool each time you change your socks.



Lamb's Wool

It's way off topic, but if your toes get cold, you can put a bit of wool in the toe space of your shoe. Don't cramp your toes, but filling the empty space with fluffy lamb's wool can really help your toes to warm themselves.

Shoe dryers



If your feet sweat a lot or you wear boots all day, you may need some help getting your shoes to dry out. A good boot/shoe dryer blows slightly warmed air into your boots or shoes and dries them out, usually in a few hours. Put your wet shoes overnight, and have dry shoes every morning.

Effective boot dryers aren't cheap. The cheap boot dryers don't really work. When shopping around, make sure the one you get has a fan to force the warmed air up. Some boot dryers have no fan, they just warm the air a little and count on heat rising to circulate the air...user reviews say this doesn't work well. So don't buy one that says "convection" in the product description...that usually means "no fan".



Tip: if you only use two of the four tubes to dry a pair of shoes, most of the forced air may blow out the two un-used tubes. You can put a pair of shoes over the un-used tubes and then all the tubes will get forced air and dry more quickly.

Positively reviewed brand/models

MaxxDry Boot, Shoe and Glove Dryer \$60 Amazon.com

DryGuy Wide-Body Boot and Glove Dryer \$80 Amazon.com

PEET Dryer Advantage M07F 4-Shoe Electric Express Dryer \$80 Amazon.com

IMPORTANT WARNINGS

DO NOT USE bleach or vinegar or oils or creams or Vaseline or anything other than what I'm describing here.

Using bleaches, oils, creams, etc either damages your skin or makes it moist or doesn't do anything!

Don't use creams or any other wet stuff.

Fungus loves moisture.

Don't take baths while you get rid of this fungus, only take showers.

With oily stuff like Vaseline you may be protecting the fungus with a layer of grease.

Don't even imagine using boric acid...boric acid is deadly, dangerous stuff...boric acid is for killing cockroaches!

Damaged skin means more places for the fungus to hide out.

We are using borax which is less toxic than table salt. But don't eat borax! Also, keep borax out of your eyes...if it accidentally gets in your eyes, rinse with lots of water.

I've never had any problems with borax.

Everything in my treatment is gentle and it works.

You are going to be gentle with your body and let it get better while you gradually massacre the fungus.

Allergic Reactions

Whenever you try a new product, you may be the rare person who has an allergic reaction. Seek medical attention right away if any of these SEVERE side effects occur when using Borax, Hydrogen peroxide, soap or body wash or Miconazole Spray:

Severe allergic reactions (rash; hives; difficulty breathing; tightness in the chest; swelling of the mouth, face, lips, or tongue).

This is not a complete list of all side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, contact your health care provider. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

I am not a doctor. I have used all the items in this treatment myself and I am simply sharing my experiences with you. I hope you never follow anyone blindly. Use your brains and listen to your body.

STEP 1 Quick relief

OK, let's get started.

Your groin is probably irritated and raw and stinky and perhaps has some infected areas. You're going to clean it with a mild soap and then use two things to start killing the fungus. One is a solution of approximately 1% borax in 1% hydrogen peroxide and the other is a spray powder.

I don't have any secrets, but if I did have a "secret", it would be borax. Borax kills funguses. It gets into your infected skin better in a solution with 1% hydrogen peroxide. There! The big secret is out.

Borax has been used for a long time for washing clothes. It's safe to use on your skin. It is less toxic than table salt. Please don't eat it, but you can use it on your skin without worrying.

It's not complicated, but please follow these directions. Please don't get creative and make the mixture stronger or weaker. Low concentrations of hydrogen peroxide promote cell growth. Too high a concentration does the opposite.

Here's what you're going to do

Here is a very brief description of what to do...there's more detail further on.

For athlete's foot you'll be soaking your feet, but after that the steps are the same for both.

1. Wash the itchy area with liquid soap or body wash (in the shower)
2. Rinse with water
3. Soak the area with a borax-peroxide solution
4. Blow dry (so the solution dries on)
5. Apply miconazole spray powder (on your skin and clothes)
6. Apply talcum powder (for lubrication)

But your skin may be infected and cracked and very sensitive. Here are some suggestions for very sore skin:

If the liquid soap or body wash stings or hurts a little, that's OK, wash quickly and rinse off immediately. Cracked skin will hurt a little or sting but will heal and feel better each day. Be sure not to apply the soap straight on your skin, squirt it in your hands, add a little water, lather it up and then apply it.

If it hurts too much, don't use the soap, use less soap or just rinse thoroughly with warm or cool water. Try the soap again after a couple days.

I suggest washing with liquid soap one day and just water the next. It's OK to just wash with soap two or three times a week so you don't remove so much of your skin's natural oils.

The borax-peroxide solution will probably feel soothing to you. If the borax-peroxide solution stings or hurts a little, that's OK. It really shouldn't hurt any more than plain water does.

If it hurts and sends you through the roof, just use the miconazole powder spray for a couple days and then try the solution again.

You can take as gradual an approach as you need. It will take longer, but your body will heal better if you are gentle with it.

Making the borax-peroxide solution

Here's how to make the borax and hydrogen peroxide solution. The hydrogen peroxide simply helps the borax sneak into small crevices in your skin better.

You can buy bottles of 3% hydrogen peroxide in any store such as Target or Wal-Mart. Buy at least a couple of quart (32 ounce) bottles to treat jock itch; buy five or ten for athlete's foot because you'll use around a quart each time you soak your feet. It's around a dollar a bottle, and you're going to use several quarts doing this cure.

Get a large pitcher or bowl (approximately gallon size). Note: don't use a white bowl or pitcher, because you need to be able to see if the white borax powder has dissolved in the solution.

Pour the whole bottle of hydrogen peroxide into the pitcher or bowl.

Then fill the empty peroxide bottle with hot tap water and pour that in.

Fill the bottle with hot water again and pour that in. That's one part hydrogen peroxide and two parts hot water. Now you have 1% hydrogen peroxide. Note: the hot water doesn't have to be boiling or super hot, don't go nuts on me here.

Add about a cup of borax to the peroxide/water and stir it in. The borax will dissolve. Add another spoonful of borax and stir again. Keep adding spoonfuls of borax and at some point the liquid will be saturated and no more will dissolve. The extra borax will drop to the bottom. You'll see little crystals or grains laying on the bottom and swirling around in the solution. That's what you want. Don't worry about being too exact. It's OK to have some extra.

The solution should feel a bit slick or slippery.

You're done making the borax-peroxide solution. If you're wondering, this is now about 1% hydrogen peroxide and about 1% borax and 98% water.

Take the empty peroxide bottle and write "Borax" on it so you're sure of what's in there.

Pour a quart of the the borax-peroxide solution into the empty peroxide bottle and cap it. The dark bottle protects the peroxide from sunlight, but in truth it takes days for sunlight to significantly weaken peroxide. The manufacturer uses a dark brown bottle because it may be months before you buy it.

Pour the rest of the solution into any kind of clean container with a cap (like a milk jug or a 2-liter bottle). Take a marker and write "Borax" on the it, so everyone knows what's in there. Then store it under the sink or anywhere it's dark.

By the way, this borax-peroxide solution is very mild and easy on your skin. You can't use too much of it or harm your skin with it (unless you are allergic to hydrogen peroxide or borax, which is very rare). The one thing it does do is kill funguses! You're not a fungus, so you're safe.

Soaking your feet (Athletes' foot only)

The main difference in treating athlete's foot is before you shower you'll be soaking your feet in a solution of borax and diluted hydrogen peroxide. See the section entitled "Making the borax-peroxide solution" for directions.

If you don't have athlete's foot, you don't need to soak your feet; just follow the directions for treating your jock itch area.

One quart of peroxide will make 3 quarts of the borax-peroxide mixture. That's more than enough to cover your feet. In the photo (above) I'm using a 12 quart "sweater box" with 2 quarts of solution in it. You can see it covers my feet completely (but if you want to cover up to your ankles, that takes 3 or 4 quarts).



Because you mixed the cool peroxide with hot water, it might have made the water too cool for your comfort. You can put the bowl of solution into the microwave and gave it one minute bursts and check when the water feels right for you.

Now pour the solution into the tub you'll be using. The smallest tub that both your feet fit in is best, as you won't need as much solution to cover your feet.

Store any extra in the empty peroxide bottle.

Before you shower

To preserve your skin's natural oils, either wash your feet before you soak or in the shower, but do not do both. Use only about a quarter or nickel size squirt of liquid soap and add water to make a lather before applying it. Basically you want to use as little soap as you can and still clean your feet. Don't scrub! Just gently wash off the surface slime and dirt and sweat. Too much soapy washing removes the precious natural skin oils. Rinse thoroughly with water. You can always just wash your feet with plain water (no soap at all), if you wish.

Soak your feet before you shower. Wiggle your toes around and slosh it all over your feet. You can rub the solution on your feet, but don't pick at the loose skin. Right now you want your skin to heal.

Pour out the used soaking solution all around the shower floor pan to kill fungus that might be there. It won't hurt septic systems.

How often to soak your feet

Soak every day for the first six days or a week. Then every other day or so.

Later on you can do it whenever you want to keep athlete's foot away. Alternatively, any time you wish, you can put on the borax-peroxide solution after you shower and let it dry on.

Where to apply the treatment

This fungus can multiply anywhere it is moist, un-oily and dark. The two most common spots are your groin (jock itch) and your feet (athlete's foot).

If you are just treating jock itch, be sure to wash and apply the borax-peroxide solution all the way from your groin to your waist-line in back (in other words, clean your butt crack and then wet it with the solution).

But it can show up in your armpits, or under breasts, or in folds of skin. It can also hide out in your belly button and beard. So when you start this treatment, pay attention to that spot where your chin itches in your beard. Or how stinky your belly button lint is. Or anywhere you have had an itch besides your feet or groin.

If you lean towards "better safe than sorry", wash all over with liquid soap or body wash, rinse and then apply the borax-peroxide solution in your beard, arm pits, under breasts, folds of skin, belly button, your butt crack, your groin and your feet.

Borax can irritate your eyes. If you accidentally get it in your eyes and they get irritated, rinse with lots of cool water.

Wash normal parts as usual

Now you'll get in the shower with your bottle of borax-peroxide solution, liquid soap or body wash and a clean washcloth.

Take your normal shower shampooing your hair, scrubbing out your pits and whatever you usually do except leave your groin and feet (or any itchy skin) until last.

Treating itchy parts

Wet your groin or feet with warm or cool water and then put a little liquid soap or body wash in your hands. About a teaspoon of liquid soap (the size of a quarter or nickel). Don't apply the straight soap as it comes out of the bottle right onto your skin. It's too concentrated. Add a little water and rub your hands together to make some lather. Then gently wash your groin and/or feet. Don't scrub. All you want to do is to remove the surface slime and dirt.

If you're treating both your groin and feet, wash off your hands in between.

Don't worry if it hurts briefly or stings a bit, that's normal. The cracks in your dry skin can sting until they heal. You may have some infected sores and they need to be kept clean. So feel free to try using less soap at first. You want to be clean, but you want to be kind to your body, too. Your skin will start to heal and hurt less each day.

BE GENTLE! Don't try to remove any dead skin or scar tissue yet. Don't scratch or rub hard. Just gently wash yourself off. Wash your butt, too.

Rinse off the soap with warm water. A hand-held shower is great for this. Sometimes it feels good to rinse with cool water.

But if the soap hurts a lot, just use warm or cool water to rinse the sore areas off. Next time use less soap and be sure not to apply it straight out of the bottle: add some water and make a lather and apply that lather. If that's too painful, just rinse with plain warm or cool

water for a few days and try the lather again. Some stinging is to be expected with cracked skin or infections, but you're not supposed to torture yourself.

Once your groin/feet are clean, turn off the shower water.

Applying the borax-peroxide solution

Take a clean wash cloth and soak it with the borax solution. Put enough on so it is dripping wet...don't be cheap here because this is what will kill off the fungus.

Gently sop the borax-peroxide solution all over your feet or groin and back towards your rectum. Don't rinse the solution off. It's OK if it drips all over your legs and feet. It won't hurt anything.

If the solution hurts and sends you through the roof, start off just washing thoroughly with plain water and, after drying off, using the miconazole powder spray for a few days. Then start applying the borax-peroxide solution. It's going to sting a bit no matter what if you have cracked skin and sores and all that. Stinging is OK, incredible pain is not. And of course, you can try it on a small area of skin first. I found I had some stinging the first day and by the third day none at all. Your experience may vary.

Drying off

How you dry off makes a difference.

Get out of the shower and use a towel to dry everything off except the infected areas where you applied the borax-peroxide solution. Use a blow dryer to dry your groin and feet. That way the borax-peroxide solution will stay on your skin. Make sure you really dry yourself off thoroughly. Blow dry between your toes if you have athlete's foot. Any drop of water is a lake for a fungus to grow in. I'm not exaggerating at all.

When you are dry you can get dressed. If you can get away with it, don't dress immediately. Exposing your skin to fresh air is good for it. Feel free to walk around with nothing on your feet or body. The more air the better to keep the fungus dry.

For athlete' foot, put the miconazole spray powder inside your shoes and on your feet. Make sure it gets between your toes. Put on your socks before your underwear. This prevents carrying the fungus from your feet to your groin. If you wish, you can spray the outside of your socks. You only need enough spray so you can see it. You don't need to go nuts and use up the whole can. On the spray can it says "a thin layer".

For jock itch, put on your underwear and pants and pull them up to your knees. Spray the inside of your underwear and spray your groin with the miconazole spray powder. Let the powder dry (it dries quickly). If you tend to sweat, put on some talcum powder. Then hike up your underwear and pants. Of course you put on your other clothes now, too.

If there's a day where you don't have time to shower or soak even once, just wash your groin and/or feet. Washing with plain water is fine. Then pour the borax-peroxide solution on a clean wash cloth and dab it around the infected area. Dry with a blow dryer. That only takes a few minutes.

Be sure to apply the miconazole spray powder twice a day. That only takes seconds.

And use talcum powder as much as you like to absorb sweat and keep lubricated.

Remember, you also need to clean up your environment. Wash all your clothes and towels and bed sheets in hot water with 1/2 cup borax and 1/2 cup detergent.

After you get out, rinse out the shower pan with water to clean up for the next person who will use it. You can spray the shower floor with white vinegar. Or bleach mixed 1/4 cup bleach with 3/4 cup water. Not both vinegar and bleach. You don't need to rinse off the vinegar or bleach. But I need to emphasize, it isn't that you are "spreading" the fungus because we are all exposed to it. If anyone "catches" it, it means they were predisposed to grow it on their skin. Cleaning the shower floor with vinegar or bleach is just being extra-careful.

Pets can carry the fungus and they manage to lay all over the place. Just try to sit somewhere your cat or dog hasn't been in or put down a towel for you to sit on. You can use the borax-peroxide solution on your pets (see the section "Treat your pets, too" on the next page).

If you sit on a cloth covered chair, put down a clean towel to sit on. You can wash the chair with the borax-peroxide solution, but the peroxide might bleach it, so try it on an inconspicuous spot first. Or you can just mix some borax with hot water (with no hydrogen peroxide) and apply that. You only need to clean the cushions once. Sunlight kills the fungus, too, so you can leave the chair or cushions out in the sun. If you can, expose your body to the sun for twenty minutes or so as that will help to kill the fungus and speed healing.

Keep step one up for at least two weeks. Your skin will heal gradually and the symptoms of your athlete's foot and jock itch will gradually go away. **BUT DON'T STOP NOW** - do Step 2 or it will all return and you'll have to start all over again.

Treat your pets, too!

By the way, your pats may be carrying the same fungus and you may as well clean them up, too.

Directions for treating your dog

Mix up some borax-peroxide solution

See "Making the borax and hydrogen peroxide solution" for mixing directions.

How much you mix up depends on how much fur you need to saturate.

Clean your dog with a pH balanced dog shampoo and rinse him off thoroughly.

Rub him with a towel so he isn't soaked with water (but he'll still be damp).

Then soak his fur with the borax-peroxide solution and let it dry naturally.

Don't rinse it off. Keep it out of his eyes.

You can repeat this once a week for three or four weeks.

Be sure to launder the towels you used to dry him off.

Shampooing a cat is something between an art and a sport. The procedure is the same as with a dog, but how you manage to do it is going to be very different depending on how resistant your cat is to being washed. If you can't shampoo, then just apply the borax-peroxide solution and let it dry. It's no good to just spray it on, because it needs to get down into their skin.

Your pet's skin produces protective oils, just like your skin does, so don't go crazy with the shampoo. Less is better. If your pet is still basically clean the second week, you don't have to shampoo again, just apply the borax-peroxide solution and let it dry.

You can spray it around where they sleep, too. Remember that peroxide can bleach, so if you care about your rug or pillows or whatever, test it on an inconspicuous spot first. The 1% peroxide might lighten the color of your dog fur. Borax alone is safe for fabrics, so you can mix just borax with hot water (with no hydrogen peroxide) and spray that around (test first, of course).

Note: If your pet still has skin problems after using the borax-peroxide three or four times, see your vet. Your pet may have a food allergy or some other infestation that requires a different treatment.

STEP 2 Kill hidden fungus and remove scar tissue

In step 1 you killed off the overgrowth of fungus and gave your skin time to heal and replenish its natural oils. The trouble is that there may still be old scar tissue which is uncomfortable, unattractive and provides places for the fungus to hid out. Step 2 continues with the same treatment as step 1, but adds the step of removing scar tissue.

Using borax as an exfoliant

Put a about a cup of borax powder into a ziploc bag and take it in the shower when you wash. Take a marker and write "Borax" on the bag, so everyone knows what's in there.

Wash the infected area by first wetting the infected area (your groin or feet) with warm or cool water. Then put a little liquid soap or body wash in your hands. About a half a teaspoon of liquid soap (the size of a quarter or nickel). Don't apply the straight soap as it comes out of the bottle right onto your skin. It's too concentrated. Add a little water and rub your hands together to make some lather. Then gently wash the infected area. Don't scrub. All you want to do is to remove the surface slime and dirt. Less soap is better and the gentle you are, the better. Then thoroughly rinse all the liquid soap off. If you wish, you can just wash with water (no soap at all).

Dip your hand into the bag of borax, take a couple tablespoons of the borax powder in your hands and rub it over your groin and/or feet. If you're treating your feet, be sure to work it between your toes. For jock itch, be sure to also rub it around your butt area. All this is easier to do with the shower off, but be sure to rinse your hands off between treating your groin and your feet (or between any two separate body areas).

Borax powder feels like soft sand and you can sort of sand off the dead skin with the borax. The fancy name is exfoliating. Be gentle and don't go crazy. Don't scratch, don't scour, just gently rub the powder around. Keep your skin wet while you rub.

If you want to, you can rub the borax all over your private parts, even though the fungus doesn't grow everywhere. I just want you to know it's safe if it gets anywhere on your skin. Borax can irritate your eyes, so if it accidentally gets in your eyes, rinse with lots of cool water).

If it stings a little, that's OK. If it really hurts, that means you still have open sores, so rinse off, and then go back and continue with step 1 for a few more days.

Don't try to remove all the dead skin at once. What you are doing is gradually removing the dead skin and scar tissue the fungus and your scratching and chaffing caused. You can leave the borax there to work while you shower, but at the end of your shower thoroughly rinse it off (before putting on the peroxide/borax solution).

Rinse off your hands, and then shampoo and wash the rest of your body as you do normally. At the end of your shower rinse off all the borax powder.

Jus as you did in step 1, sop the borax-peroxide solution onto the infected area. Dry off the rest of your body with a towel, but not the infected area. Blow dry where you put the borax-peroxide solution.

The miconazole spray powder can be used twice a day for 2 weeks for jock itch, and for 4 weeks for athlete's foot.

Repeat exfoliating with the borax powder every other day for two weeks. Don't do it every day! You want to leave some time for new healthy skin to grow back between exfoliating treatments. If you do it too often your skin will just get irritated. If you feel every other day is too much exfoliating, back off to every three or four days...or just rub more gently. But in any case, at the end of your shower, thoroughly rinse off the borax powder, and then apply the borax-peroxide solution and let that dry on your skin.

Continue to use talcum powder as a lubricant and to absorb sweat.

Continue to wash your laundry using borax (and detergent). You may notice borax gets your clothes cleaner than before, too.

STEP 3 — Maintenance

Your symptoms may clear up in a few days or couple weeks or it may take longer. It partly depends on how bad it got before you took action and diligent you are able to be in apply the treatment.

Maintenance is simply continuing with things you're already doing.

What to do

WEAR CLOTHES/SHOES THAT BREATH

WEAR CLEAN UNDER-CLOTHES EVERYDAY

USE LIQUID SOAP OR BODY WASH

USE AS LITTLE SOAP AS POSSIBLE

THOROUGHLY DRY AFTER WASHING

USE TALCUM POWDER

Why

HELPS SWEAT EVAPORATE

KEEPS SWEAT AND FUNGUS FROM ACCUMULATING

MAINTAINS SKIN'S NATURAL PH

PRESERVES SKIN OILS

DRIER = LESS FUNGAL GROWTH

LUBRICATES TO PREVENT CHAFFING

Now you can towel your entire body dry, but then also use the blow dryer on your groin and feet to get them completely dry. There is always going to be fungus around so keeping moisture away is your first line of defense. If it returns it usually means your shoes aren't breathing well enough or your underwear isn't loose enough or you are allowing sweat to build up in your dark, warm private places.

You can continue to use talcum powder, especially before and after you exercise. You should have already stopped using the miconazole spray powder (after two weeks for jock itch and after four weeks for athlete's foot).

Don't ever use bar soap again on your groin or feet (or anyplace a fungal infection showed up). It will remove protective oils from your skin out and leave your skin defenseless against future funguses. Continue to use a mild liquid soap or body wash, but not too much or too often. You'll have to experiment for yourself to find out what is right for you. It's OK to only wash your feet and private parts with soap a couple times a week. Other times just wash with water. Having had jock itch or athlete's foot demonstrates those areas had lost too much of their natural oils. Your skin does produce more oil, but go easier down there in the future.

As one gets older, the skin can produce less oil and the immune system can slow down. So you may be more unprotected than you were in the past. But emotional stress can make skin go nuts. Regardless, you don't have to be a victim of fungus anymore.

You can use the borax-peroxide solution once a week, once a month or whenever you feel like it. It kills funguses, but is harmless for your skin. This is especially true if you have folds of skin that create dark, warm, moist areas that never do get a chance to breath.

Hot baths and bubble baths can really strip away the natural oils from your skin. I'm not saying you can't ever have a hot bubble bath, but just recognize that when you do, you're skin will take quite awhile to replace missing oils (a day or two). If you took a hot bubble bath every night your skin would never fully recover. You'd probably be diagnosed with eczema or some other latin term. Recovery is simple: Simply bath less often. Use warm

water instead of hot. Use less soap and a milder pH soap. You need to learn to observe what your skin is telling you and respond appropriately. Of course, if there is a fungal infection, apply the borax-peroxide solution as in step 1.

Your skin isn't made to be as clean as modern science can make it. Some parts of your body, such as your nose, may produce a lot more oil than the back of your hand. Nurses have all sorts of problems with rough, scaly skin from washing their hands too often and too thoroughly with harsh soaps. Lately all sorts of anti-bacteria foams have been developed that do the job but don't strip all the oils away.

So if you wash with liquid soap or body wash two or three times a week, life will go on. In between you can wash with plain water. Or just use less soap. I use good old bar soap to scrub out my pits and I use a small amount of liquid soap on my groin. I rarely use any soap on my feet. That works for me. You need to find out what works for you.

You can apply oils or lotions to add oils to your skin, and they may help, but they aren't the same as your natural oils. It's better to preserve your natural skin oils.

Following these directions and applying what you've learned should keep you free of jock itch and athlete's foot.

Conclusion

Perhaps you now see that all this is a careful balancing act between cleaning, killing off the fungus, and letting your skin heal. If you help your body get back to normal, it will be able to protect you. That's why I lay out such a definite plan of attack for you to follow. Don't go nuts and change the steps or the formulas. Stronger isn't better because you can damage your skin with strong soaps and such. And, of course, too little just won't get the job done. Follow the directions and your jock itch and athlete's foot should become a distant memory.

The end of itch and the beginning of a new, normal life

We shall never cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

T. S. Eliot

Important note

If you've been doing this treatment for a month and you're not back to normal, either you aren't following directions, or you have some other underlying health condition or maybe what you have isn't the jock itch/athlete's foot fungus.

**If this treatment doesn't work for you,
go see a doctor to find out what's going on.**

Soap is important

Why should I care about pH?

A really acuate, scientific explanation of what pH measures is beyond me. I'm sorry. It involves mucho mathematical crap about counting charged hydrogen particles. The H in "pH" stands for "Hydrogen". Nobody knows what the "p" stands for. I'm not kidding.

Anyway, I'm just going to explain why it exists and how to use it for choosing products to heal your skin.

We make judgements about color all the time, so bear with me while I use color as an analogy.



Look at the color spectrum above.

The far left is yellow. The far right is blue. Mix them together and you get greens...and greenish blues or blueish greens and greenish yellows or yellowish greens. You need a way to describe the various shades.



You could divide the spectrum up into squares, number them and then just use the numbers to describe a color. That way you could go on-line to order some paint and ask for a "Green number 8" and know what to expect.

You could even say you want an 8.5, and all they have to do is add some more blue.

OK, here's why I dragged you through all that. In nature there are three kinds of stuff. One is acid. Stomach juice and battery acid are both very acid. Then there are alkaline things like Tums and baking soda which are very alkaline. The third kind of stuff is "inert" meaning it doesn't react in water. So imagine a pure acid is yellow and a pure alkaline is blue. Mix them together and you get green. What would be green number 7 (the middle)? Distilled water and eggs are right in the middle. Anything in the middle is called "neutral". That's why, when you have an "acid stomach" you swallow some Tums (Tums are alkaline). They combine and become closer to neutral. And pH is measured with numbers from zero to 14. A low number is more acid. A higher number is more alkaline. So you see, "pH" is just a number that you can use to tell how acidic or alkaline something is.

You can buy pH strips. They are just pieces of paper you touch on anything wet and they change color. You compare the color to a chart like the one above and you'll know approximately how acid or alkaline something is. You can test your soap's pH this way, if you're that dedicated.

Your skin's pH is naturally between 4 and 6.5. Your skin does not like to be neutral. If you skin was 7 or higher it would soon become unhealthy. Being just a little on the acid side helps your skin to fight off funguses and bacteria. That's why you should choose a soap that has a pH close to your skin's natural pH. When products claim to be great because they have a "neutral pH" they are saying it's around 7 (although catch words like "balanced" can mean whatever they want them to mean, too). Most bar soaps are very alkaline, around 9 or 10, but some liquid soaps are around 6. Some body washes are around 5.5. That's why I recommend liquid soap or body wash. There's a table of soaps and their pH later in this book.

There's one more important thing. You can have something which is very acidic, like lemon juice, but if you add a lot of water, it becomes a weak acid. Same thing if you add a lot of water to an alkaline: it becomes weak. A weak acid or a weak alkaline won't have as much effect as a strong one. Also, A tiny nibble of Tums won't do much for your acid stomach, so it matters how much you use.

Borax has a pH of around 9.5...it's very alkaline. But the borax-peroxide solution is only 1% borax, so it won't harm your skin. When you rub straight borax powder on your skin it is very alkaline, but then you wash it off with lots of water and your skin is fine. So you can leave the borax-peroxide solution on your skin no problem. But don't leave straight borax powder on your skin.

The pH of Talcum Powder

Here's another great blessing: talcum powder doesn't have a pH! Only things that dissolve in water have a pH and talc doesn't dissolve in water. It doesn't change the pH of your skin when you use it.

So when you buy baby powder, look on the label and make sure it says "talc" and not "corn starch". Talcum powder acts like a jillion little ball bearings to help prevent your skin rubbing and getting chaffed. It's like a dry lubricant. Talc is the softest known mineral.

Choosing and using soap

When you wash with water, plain old dirt will get carried away with the water. But sometimes dirt is mixed with oil, such as the oil your skin produces, and water just sort of bounces off that oily dirt. Same thing with laundry: dusty dirt will wash right out with plain water, but oily dirt stays put unless you add soap (or detergent).

Oily dirt is where soap does a neat trick. Up close, each soap particle has two ends. One end loves to hook up with water, and the other loves to hook up with oil. In water it floats around and picks up bits of oil. It even picks up the oily dirt that water alone can't grab.

For cleaning, that's great. In the laundry you want all the oils and dirt removed. But your skin produces oils that protect you. Skin that is too dry cannot fight off funguses. Skin that is too dry becomes scaly and hard.

"Dry" is a crappy term, because it can mean "lacking oil" or "lacking water". You want

to keep your skin dry (low moisture) so the fungus can't grow, yet you don't want it to be dry (de-oiled) because the natural oils fight off the fungus. Oh well. I hope you can figure out which "dry" I mean in context.

Normal skin surface pH is between 4 and 6.5 in healthy people, though it varies among the different areas of skin on your body. You can see in the illustrations in the "Why should I care about pH?" section that 7 is a neutral pH, and anything lower than that is acidic. Normally the oily layer on your skin is slightly acidic. It is this thin, acidic layer that protects the skin from bacterial and fungal infections.

If your skin becomes too alkaline (above 6.5), the skin is more susceptible to invasions by fungi and bacteria. So choose a soap (or body wash) with a pH of 6.5 or lower. There's a "Table of soaps and their pH" on the next page to guide you.

Soaps wash away some of the the acidic, oily protective layer. Too much washing, or too much soap and your skin can lose its protective oily surface coating. But your skin continues to create more oils. It takes about 3 hours for your skin to produce enough oil to recover from a single washing. But if you wash with soap three times a day, it can take 14 hours for your skin to recover. If you scrub and use lots of soap too often, it might not get back to normal at all.

But you need to keep your skin clean to get rid of the fungus that has taken over.

The answer is to use a mild soap, not to use much of it and not to use it too often.

Don't put straight soap on your skin. Put a bit in your hand(s), and mix it with some water to make a lather. Wash with that lather. That way you don't hit one spot with a ton of soap. Too much soap will make a dry spot.

When you wash your groin you only need to use about a nickel or quarter sized dollop of soap (about half a teaspoon). Mix that with some water and that is plenty to clean your groin. The same goes for your feet. It's perfectly OK to only wash with soap a couple times a week and to just wash with plain water otherwise.

And don't scrub your skin. Just rub the soapy lather around gently and then rinse it off. You're not scrubbing a floor, you're just removing the stinky fungus, sweat and dirt on the surface. Scrubbing too hard will just remove more of the protective oils and irritate your skin.

Table of soaps and their pH

Try to select a soap or body wash that is mild. You can pick them by names such as "unscented" or "aloe" or "chamomile" or "lavender" or "baby" or "calm" or "moisture" (you get the idea). I don't recommend anything with a name like "Icy Blast".

"Anti-bacterial" makes no difference at all for you. The borax is what kills the fungus.

You want to pick a soap (or body wash) with a pH of 6.5 or lower (above the dotted line). No bar soaps I've found are below 6.5. Only liquid soaps or body washes are acceptable for your delicate skin!

The left hand column lists the pH according to the manufacturers MSDS (Manufacturers Safety Data Sheet) Sometimes they give a range of pH numbers, like "5.5 to 6.7". In that case I listed the average pH, or "6.1".

The column with **bold red type** indicates the pH readings from my own repeated tests with pH paper on a few products I purchased. For some reason I trust this more...

5.0	4.0	Aveda® Brilliant shampoo I'm not suggesting using this to wash up, I just had it on hand so I tested it
5.5	5.0	Irish Spring® Clear Body Wash Wash(5.0 to 6.0) Smells very "soapy"
6.4	5.0	Dial® liquid soap (5.8 to 6.9) Easily washes off completely
6.0	4.0	Olay® Quench Body Wash, Olay Age Defying Body Wash, Olay Calm Release Body Wash, Olay Ultra Moisture Body Wash, Olay Winter Retreat Body Wash, Olay Fresh Reviving Body Wash (5.5-6.5) Feels a bit oily, like a hand lotion
6.3	4.5	Johnson's Baby Shampoo (6.0 to 6.5) (from Johnson & Johnson)
6.1	6.5	Softsoap® brand Pump Lavender - Chamomile (5.5 to 6.7)
6.7		Aveeno® Baby Wash and Shampoo (6.2 to 7.2)
6.7	6.5	Softsoap® brand Pump Lavender - Chamomile (6.0 to 7.4) Also Softsoap® brand Soothing Aloe Vera Hand Soap Softsoap® brand Antibacterial Hand Soap with Light Moisturizers
6.8		Johnson's® Moisture Care Baby Wash (6.5 to 7.0)
6.9		Ajax® Dishwashing Liquid (6.3 to 7.5)
6.9	5.0	Palmolive® Oxy Plus dish washing liquid (6.5 to 7.3) Because of the low the pH in my testing, I'm choosing this for dish washing
7.0		Water (pure water)
7.0	7.0	3% Hydrogen peroxide 100% hydrogen peroxide had a pH of 6.2 3% is so diluted it's basically the pH of water

- 7.0 Olay® Foaming Face Wash, Olay Gentle Foaming Face Wash (6.5 to 7.5)
- 7.0 Dove® bar soap (6.5 to 7.5)
- 7.0 **7.0** Neutrogena® - Facial Cleansing Bar
- 7.0 **6.0** Palmolive® Green dish washing liquid (6 to 8)
- 7.8 Olay® Quench Bar, Olay Calm Release Bar, Olay Ultra Moisture Bar, Olay Sheer Moisture Bar, Olay Body Age Defying Bar, Olay Body Fresh Reviving Bar, Olay Purely Pristine Body Bar
- 8.0** Borax-hydrogen peroxide solution (approx 1% borax + 1% hp + 98% water)
- 8.9 Olay Daily Foaming Mud Cleanser (8.4 to 9.4)
- 9.0 Ultra Dawn® Dishwashing Liquid
- 9.0 Ivory® Dishwashing Liquid
- 9.5 Ivory® bar soap (classic)
- 9.5 **9.5** Borax in water (alone)
- 10.2 Olay® Body Spa Exfoliating Bar
- "Not available" Dial® Antibacterial Bar Soap—Gold, White
Dial® For Men Bar Soap—Recharge, Full Force, Blue Grit
Dial® For Men 3D Bar Soap
That's right, the Dial data safety sheet says the pH of these bar soaps is "Not available"!
I say, "Don't use it or any bar soap!"

A wonderful. plain english explanation of how soaps work can be found at
<http://poisonivy.aesir.com/view/soap.html>

Choosing a spray powder

All of the sprays listed below contain 2% miconazole nitrate as their active ingredient. There are other antifungal chemicals, but none of the topical treatments are guaranteed cure you. They have only a 50 to 70% rate of success (this includes Miconazole, Terbinafine (Lamisil), Naftifine (Naftin), Butenafine (Mentax), and Tolnaftate (Tinactin, Altate).

There are pills you can get to kill the fungus, but I figure I'd rather try a less invasive path first. Nothing will handle 100% of fungal situations, but using creams, steroids and pills can wind up permanently damaging your skin. Borax and miconazole is an opportunity to give a less risky treatment a chance.

Miconazole is the one I have hands-on experience with. And combined with the borax-peroxide solution, it will definitely kill fungus. Of course, the "cure" isn't just killing funguses. The "cure" really means getting your skin back to normal by restoring the natural oils and pH, removing scar tissue and making sure your sweat evaporates.

When I started I was using the Lotrimin spray powder, because my local Walmart didn't have Ting on the shelf. But then I ordered a four cans of Ting on-line for less than the price of two Lotrimins. They both seem to be effective, but I like that Ting lists Aloe Vera Gel as it's major ingredient. Nice for healing damaged skin. I think my four cans will last forever.

And both have directions saying you can use them for 4 weeks to treat athlete's foot and 2 weeks to treat jock itch.

Both of these spray powders contain 2% miconazole nitrate

Ting Antifungal Spray Powder 4.5 oz

\$2.67 Walmart (in store, check your local store for availability)

\$2.92 Walmart.com (on-line, if you buy 4)(\$11.68 + .97 = \$12.65 total)

\$3.64 Walmart.com (on-line, if you buy 1)

Inactive ingredients: Aloe Vera Gel, Aluminum Starch Octenylsuccinate, Isopropyl Myristate, Propylene Carbonate, SD Alcohol 40-B (10% w/w), Sorbitan Monoleate, Stearalkonium Hectorite. Propellant: Isobutane/Propane.

Lotrimin Spray Powder 4.6 oz

Lotrimin Itch Spray Powder 4.6

Lotrimin Deodorant Spray Powder 4.6 oz (has fragrance added)

\$6.10 to \$6.78 at Walmart (in store, check your local store for availability)

On-line orders, add \$.97 shipping

Except for fragrance in the deodorant version, all three of the Lotrimin's listed have the same inactive ingredients: Alcohol Denat. (8% V/V), Fragrance, Isobutane, Stearalkonium Hectorite, Talc.

By the way, "Stearalkonium Hectorite" is just a powdered clay.

Identifying a fungal infection

Symptoms

The first sign is itching. The fungus forms a slimy layer that is easy to mistake for sweat. It is usually stinky, too.

You may see a circular red rash with raised edges. It may not have raised edges, but it will have the clearly defined edges. You may find the center of the rash to be reddish-brown in color, similar to a recent bruise. Or it may just be a light pink, with a raw area in the middle. You may have bumps or blisters or just redness.

Further along there is dry, scaly, flaking, cracked skin. Eventually it builds up into bumpy, hard scar tissue. What symptoms you see on you depends on how bad it has gotten.

To see photos of jock itch, go to http://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Tinea_cruris or just Google "Tinea cruris" and then click on "Images". Most of the photos show pretty bad cases. You may just experiences sliminess and pink, itchy, irritated skin.

Scientific names for fungal infections

In this book I've tried to keep things simple so you can get on with conquering your problems ASAP. But here I'll expound in more detail.

First off, I've been calling the critters that cause jock itch and athlete's foot "fungus" ("funguses" or "fungi" is when there's more than one fungus), but scientifically they are called dermatophytes (pronounced DER-MAT-AH-FIGHTS). Dermatophytes are just funguses that invade and grow in dead keratin (keratin is just the top, dead layer of skin that covers your body). Keratin is also found in horn, hair, feathers, hoofs, nails, claws, bills, etc. That's why you can get a fungal infection in your toenails...or your beard...or really anywhere. But most of your body stays nice and free of moisture so the fungus can't grow well. The main thing is that the borax-peroxide solution will work anywhere the fungus hangs out.

And, just because scientists can never have too many Latin terms for stuff, there's a different name for a fungal infection depending on where it is on your body. Here are some examples:

Scalp - tinea capitis

Feet - tinea pedis

Hands - tinea manuum

Nail - tinea unguium (or onychomycosis)

Beard area - tinea barbae

Groin - tinea cruris

Body including trunk and arms- tinea corporis

Borax information

Borax is also known as sodium borate, sodium tetraborate, or disodium tetraborate.

Borax and boric acid both contain an element called boron, but borax and boric acid are not the same thing. Borax contains some boric acid. But boric acid is prepared by reacting borax with a mineral acid, such as hydrochloric acid.

Your stomach produces hydrochloric acid, so if you eat borax, your stomach acid can convert it into boric acid. Thus I say, "Don't eat borax." I am simply being as cautious as possible and I want you to be as informed and safe as possible. Look at "Ingestion" in the borax msds on the next page for more specific information.

Borax is an ingredient in detergents and cosmetics. In Asia, it has been used on food, mainly as a texturizer, but this is now banned. Wikipedia: "Borax, given the E number E285, is used as a food additive in some countries but is banned in the United States. As a consequence, certain foods, such as caviar, produced for sale in the U.S. contain higher levels of salt to assist preservation. Its use as a cooking ingredient is to add a firm rubbery texture to the food, or as a preservative. In oriental cooking it is mostly used for its texturing properties."

There is great article about borax and boric acid from the Centre for Food Safety in Hong Kong. The link is given below. Here are some excerpts:

"Boron occurs naturally in food as borate (B₄O₇²⁻) or boric acid. The richest sources of boron include fruits, leafy vegetables, legumes, and nuts. Wine, cider and beer also contain high levels of boron."

"Boric acid and borax have long been used as additive in various foods. Since boric acid and borax are effective against yeasts, and to a much lesser extent, against moulds and bacteria, they can be used to preserve food products. In addition, both of these additives can be used to increase the elasticity and crispiness of foods as well as prevent shrimps from darkening."

"Health Effects of Boric Acid and Borax

At low concentrations, borax can be converted to boric acid in body prior to absorption.

In humans, it is believed that adverse reactions associated with low doses of boric acid per day are unlikely to occur. However, exposure to large amounts of boric acid over a short period of time can affect the stomach, bowels, liver, kidney, and brain, and may even lead to death."

http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/multimedia/multimedia_pub/multimedia_pub_fsf_37_01.html

Eye irritation

I have cautioned in several places in this book that borax can be an eye irritant, and to keep it out of your eyes. I have suggested that if it accidentally gets in your eyes to rinse with plenty of cool water. I have included this caution because this is what I have read.

I have never personally experienced borax irritating my eyes. Perplexingly, borax (or

"sodium borate") is listed as an ingredient in several eye washes.

Examples of eye washes that list sodium borate as an ingredient:

Optrex Eye Wash (Optrex)

Collyrium Fresh for Fresh Eyes Eye Wash (Bausch & Lomb)

Advanced Eye Relief Eye Wash (Bausch & Lomb)

Walgreens Sterile Soothing Eye Wash Eye Irrigating Solution (Walgreen's)

Calgonate® Emergency Eyewash (Calgonate)

Eye Wash Irrigating Solution (Hi-Tech Pharmacal Co. Inc)

So what's the deal? How can it be both irritating to the eyes AND used in an eye wash? For one thing, it is in a low concentration in eye wash. The companies do not disclose the concentrations of each ingredient.

Collyrium lists these ingredients:

Active Ingredients: Purified water (99.05%) – eyewash

Inactive Ingredients: Boric acid, sodium borate and sodium chloride.

Preservative added: benzalkonium chloride (0.01%).

Manufacturer's Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)

From the U.S. Borax Inc. MSDS (makers of 20 Mule Team Borax):

"Emergency overview

Borax is a white, odorless, powdered substance that is not flammable, combustible, or explosive and has low acute oral and dermal toxicity.

Potential ecological effects

Large amounts of Borax can be harmful to plants and other species. Therefore, releases to the environment should be minimized.

Potential health effects

Routes of exposure: Inhalation is the most significant route of exposure in occupational and other settings. Dermal* exposure is not usually a concern because Borax is poorly absorbed through intact skin.

Inhalation: Occasional mild irritation effects to nose and throat may occur from inhalation of Borax dust at levels greater than 10 mg/m³.

Eye contact: Borax is non-irritating to eyes in normal industrial use.

Skin contact: Borax does not cause irritation to intact skin.

Ingestion: Products containing Borax are not intended for ingestion. Borax has a low acute toxicity. Small amounts (e.g., a teaspoonful) swallowed accidentally are not likely to cause effects; swallowing amounts larger than that may cause gastrointestinal symptoms.

Cancer: Borax is not a known carcinogen."

* dermal means "live skin — the skin below the epidermis or dead surface skin (my note)

You can download the complete borax msds at:

www.anvilfire.com/21centbs/material/33850-usborax-borax.pdf

Daily Schedule

NOTE: when I say "infected area", I mean wherever you have a fungal infection that is bothering you. With jock itch, the "infected area" is your groin. With athlete's foot, the "infected area" is your feet. If you have both athlete's foot and jock itch, the "infected area" is both your groin and feet.

GETTING BACK TO NORMAL

Before you start — Read pages 1 to 12 of "Getting Back to Normal"

Get the treatment supplies together (see the list on page 7 of "Getting Back to Normal")

Wash all laundry with hot water, 1/2 cup detergent and 1/2 cup borax.

Exercise may cause more sweating and chaffing, so you may want to not exercise for the first few days. If you do exercise, apply talcum powder beforehand.

Athlete's foot: wipe out inside of sweaty boots or shoes with borax-peroxide solution.

Dry your boots or shoes thoroughly.

Consider getting a boot/shoe dryer to keep your footwear dry (see page 11 in "Getting Back to Normal").

STEP 1 — Read pages 13 to 19 of "Getting Back to Normal"

Write down the date you start here: _____

Cross off the days as you go along.

Day 1

Athlete's foot only: Soak your feet in borax-peroxide solution before showering.

Get in the shower

Wash your hair, arm pits and any other uninfected area as you would normally (shampoo your hair, use soap or whatever on your armpits, etc.)

Wash infected area with liquid soap or body wash (use as little soap as possible)
If the soap is too irritating, wash with plain water. Cool water is OK, too

Rinse thoroughly.

Apply borax-peroxide solution .

(soak your feet, groin, butt crack, arm pits, belly button, beard, folds in skin)

Dry areas where you didn't apply the solution with a towel.

Dry the other areas with a blow dryer.

Athlete's foot only: spray your feet, inside your shoes and outside your socks with miconazole spray powder, especially between your toes.

Jock itch only: Spray your groin and butt, and inside your underwear.

Put talcum powder in underwear, shoes, or wherever you sweat.

If you wash the infected area again during the day, use only water, and apply the borax-peroxide solution again and blow dry. Keep a bottle of the solution in your gym bag.

Change your socks and underwear daily.

If your underwear or socks are sweaty, change them more than once a day.

Put any towels or wash cloths that touched the infected area in the laundry.

Apply the miconazole spray powder twice a day (on the infected area).

Day 2

Same as Day 1, except do not use any soap when you wash the infected area.

Day 3

Repeat day 1 (wash with liquid soap)

Day 4

Same as day 2 (no soap)

Day 5

Repeat day 1 (wash with liquid soap)

Day 6

Same as day 2 (no soap)

After day 6

After this, you just treat the infected areas (by "infected area", I mean wherever you had a fungal infection was initially bothering you. With jock itch, the "infected area" is your groin. With athlete's foot, the "infected area" is your feet.). You don't need to be putting the borax-peroxide solution all over after day 5.

Also, for athlete's foot, you only soak your feet every other day after day 5.

Day 7

Athlete's foot only: Soak your feet in borax-peroxide solution

Get in the shower

Wash your hair, arm pits and any other uninfected area as you would normally

Wash infected area with water

Apply borax-peroxide solution

(soak only the particularly infected areas, for example, if you are treating athlete's foot, only soak your feet))

Dry areas where you didn't apply the solution with a towel

Dry the other areas with a blow dryer

Athlete's foot only: spray your feet, inside shoes and socks with miconazole spray powder, especially between your toes

Jock itch only: spray your groin and butt, and inside your underwear

Put talcum powder wherever your sweat. On your groin, your feet, between your toes, and so on. You can also put it in your shoes.

Put any towels or wash cloths that touched the infected area in the laundry.

Apply the miconazole spray powder twice a day.

If you wash the infected area again during the day, use only water, and apply the borax-peroxide solution again and blow dry.

Change your socks and underwear daily.

If your underwear or socks are sweaty, change them more than once a day.

Day 8

Do the same as day 6 (except no foot soaking)

Day 9

Same as day 6

Day 10

Do the same as day 6 (except no foot soaking)

Day 11

Same as day 6

Day 13

Do the same as day 6 (except no foot soaking)

Day 13

Same as day 6

Day 14

Do the same as day 6 (except no foot soaking)

Your skin should be much more healthy now.

Even if it is, go on to step 2 or the fungus will return.

If your itching and redness have not gotten a lot better, either you have not been following the directions or maybe what you have isn't the jock itch/athlete's foot fungus. Go see a doctor and find out what is really going on.

You are done with Step 1

STEP 2 — Read pages 20 to 21 of “Getting Back to Normal”

What changes in step 2:

We are adding the step of using the borax powder as an exfoliate in the shower.

Jock itch: discontinue using the miconazole spray powder after day 14

Athlete's foot: you can continue to use the miconazole spray powder twice a day up to day 28
You'll only soak your feet in the borax-peroxide solution every 4 or 5 days.

Write down the date you start step 2 here: _____

Cross off the days as you go along.

Day 15

Get in the shower

Wash your hair, arm pits and any other un-itchy area as you would normally
(Shampoo, soap, whatever you like)

Wash infected area with water

Use the borax powder as an exfoliant (rub gently) only on infected areas

Rinse thoroughly with water

Apply borax-peroxide solution
(soak only the particularly infected areas, for example,
if you are treating athlete's foot, only soak your feet)

Dry areas where you didn't apply the solution with a towel

Dry the other areas with a blow dryer

Put talcum powder wherever your sweat. On your groin, your feet, between your toes, and so on. You can also put it in your shoes.

Athlete's foot only: continue to spray your feet and inside your shoes with miconazole spray powder twice a day

Day 16

Same as day 15, except you DO NOT use borax powder as exfoliant

Day 17

Same as day 15

Note: if your skin is tender, you can use exfoliate with the borax powder every three or four days (instead of every other day). Remember, rub gently, don't scrub.

Day 18

Same as day 15, except you DO NOT use borax powder as an exfoliant

Day 19

Same as day 15

Day 20

Same as day 15, except you DO NOT use borax powder as an exfoliant

Day 21

Same as day 15

Day 22

Same as day 15, except you DO NOT use borax powder as an exfoliant

Day 23

Same as day 15

Day 24

Same as day 15, except you DO NOT use borax powder as an exfoliant

Day 25

Same as day 15

Day 26

Same as day 15, except you DO NOT use borax powder as an exfoliant

Day 27

Same as day 15

Day 28

Same as day 15, except you DO NOT use borax powder as an exfoliant

You are done with Step 2

STEP 3 — Read pages 22 to 23 of “Getting Back to Normal”

Maintenance

Stay dry

Continue to wear clean socks and underwear everyday.

Continue to wear clothes and shoes that breath (that allow air circulation).

Continue to use talcum powder anytime, especially before exercising.

Continue to use a blow dryer on your groin and feet after showering and toweling off.

Soap

Continue to wash your groin and feet with liquid soap or body wash (no harsh bar soap).

Use as little soap as possible and as infrequently as possible.

Towels

Now you can use the same towel to dry your entire body. You don't have to use a clean towel every time you shower, but make sure you let it dry between uses.

Optional

Continue to use borax with your detergent

Keep a bottle of the borax-peroxide solution in the shower and apply it once a while
(once a week or once a month)
(remember to wash your butt and to apply the solution there too)

OR you can apply the borax powder and rub with it once in a while
and then rinse thoroughly with water

If the fungus ever returns

The fungus will always be lurking, waiting for an opening to return. Don't freak out if it shows up again. Stuff happens. You will always have what you need to get back in control.

First, examine what might be inviting the fungus back. Try to figure out what you did. Are your shoes too tight or don't breath? Have you been using too much liquid soap too often? Have you started using a harsh soap or some other new thing (such as a moistening cream or whatever)? Have you been stripping away your skin's oils by taking bubble baths or baths that are too long or too hot? Did you go too long without washing? Are you wearing the same clothes for days in a row? Do you clothes chaff? Should you be using talcum powder more often? Maybe you need to re-read “Getting Back to Normal” for ideas.

Or you may have a lousy immune system. Or you're diabetic. Or you might be under stress.

No matter if you figure it out or not, simply go back and do step 1 for a few days. You might want to apply the borax-peroxide solution once a week in the future.

You can even go through the whole treatment again, if you need to. It's a gentle treatment. No harm, no foul.