



## **Today's Podiatrist: Drs. Jeremy and Emily Cook Rising Stars at Harvard**

Take one concert pianist pre-med student, add a wine-country-born and raised academic, and mix thoroughly at Southern Illinois University (SIU). What do you get? Emily and Jeremy Cook, both doctors of podiatric medicine (DPMs), both instructors at Harvard Medical School, and two of podiatric medicine's rising stars.

These two podiatrists met as undergraduate students and have been together ever since. Married just after graduation from SIU, they both headed directly to the California College of Podiatric Medicine (CCPM) because the career offered them the "flexibility to be together, and practice medicine and surgery." Luckily, after graduating with honors from CCPM in 2004 (Emily was the valedictorian and Jeremy was the salutatorian), they were both offered residency programs at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston (BIDMC). There they trained for three years in residency and an additional two years in a fellowship in reconstructive surgery and research. Just to add more to the mix, they both were accepted into the Harvard School of Public Health where they earned master of public health (MPH) degrees in addition to their fellowships. "There were a lot of sleepless nights during those two years," Emily said.

Now these two rising stars have a new passion: teaching. Both hold academic positions in surgery at Harvard Medical School, teaching first-year students practical applications of epidemiology and critical analysis of medical research. In addition, each is working on several research projects, and together they are heading up the Amputation Prevention Initiative in Massachusetts. Passionate about public health, Emily often encourages other podiatrists to join the American Public Health Association. "Every day, podiatrists are working in public health. You don't need to leave or sacrifice your practice to contribute. It actually strengthens your practice and position within the medical community."

In jest, Jeremy says they spend "60 percent of our time in the clinic and doing surgery, and 60% of our time doing research during a typical day." Thankfully, although both podiatrists admit to being somewhat overextended, they are thrilled to have these opportunities. However, even when they take time off, they are still connected to their profession. They often try to "sneak off to a Red Sox game, or take a sail on the Charles River," Jeremy states. When you look closer, you can see that even that time is often work-related: the Cooks work Red Sox games with the BIDMC Emergency Medical Team.

Both Emily and Jeremy teach students and residents at Beth Israel as part of the residency program, and Emily serves as the director of extern training. They agree that podiatric medicine is a field that isn't well-known and wish they had more students visiting to learn more. "This is a flexible career, and there are great options for any student interested in medicine," states Jeremy.

“We look to each other for support,” admits Jeremy. “It’s great to have someone you trust with you every day, teaching together, operating and seeing patients as a team. You have an instant second opinion.” For these two podiatric physicians, life is just the way they like it. “You have to grab every opportunity,” they say. And these two are certainly taking that statement literally and working toward becoming leaders in the profession, both in teaching and in public health.

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