

NEXT-TIME QUESTION



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- b) reasons that are outside mainstream physics.
- c) basic physics concepts.



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Answer: c, basic physics concepts

First of all, the coals are wood, a very poor conductor of heat. Wood is a poor conductor even when it's hot, which is why wooden handles are used on cookware. Even when the wood is red hot, its poor conductivity allows quick steps without the transfer of very much heat. High temperature and how much heat transfers are entirely different physics concepts. Secondly, if your feet are damp because of perspiration or wet surrounding grass, even less heat is transferred to your feet. Why? Two reasons: Some of the heat energy goes into evaporating the moisture that would otherwise burn you, and, when the moisture turns to vapor it provides an insulating blanket. This is why you wet your finger before touching a hot clothes iron.

For mind-over-matter advocates, try walking on red hot coals of iron — ouch!

Caution: Walking on red hot coals is very dangerous and many people have accidentally burned themselves.

