

Fact Sheet

Footwear Assessment and Advice

The importance of a good fit

Footwear plays an important role in protecting your feet as well as offering support. We believe a lot of foot and ankle conditions or injuries can be reduced or alleviated if the right footwear is chosen for the natural shape of your feet.

Feet should not be forced to conform to the shape of shoes. Ill fitting shoes can contribute to the development of corns, calluses, bunions, hammertoes and other crippling foot problems and may contribute to pain in your knees, back, ankles or hips.



The ideal shoe should accommodate your foot shape, support your biomechanical needs and be appropriate for the activities you undertake.

Shopping for the ideal shoe

When selecting the right shoes for your feet, follow these simple guidelines:

- Determine the main activity you want to use the shoes for (i.e. leisure, work, sport).
- Have both feet measured every time you purchase shoes. Your foot may change shape and size as you get older.
- Try on new shoes towards the end of the day, as feet will often swell and become larger after a day of standing or sitting. Make sure you try on both shoes.
- Fit new shoes to your largest foot. Most people have one foot larger than the other.
- Sizes vary among shoe brands and styles. Rely on how a shoe fits not on the marked size.
- When the shoe is on your foot, toes should wriggle freely.
- Shoes should feel firm not tight.
- Most high heeled-shoes have a pointed narrow toe box that can cramp the toes and forces them into an unnatural triangular shape. As heel height increases, the pressure under the ball of the foot may double, leading to short and long term damage to soft tissue, joints and toes.



Highett
Podiatry

Fact Sheet

Footwear Assessment and Advice

What to look for in a well fitting shoe

Materials:

Leather is preferred for shoe uppers for durability and strength. Leather also allows for good evaporation of perspiration.

Synthetic or rubber are best for the sole as they are generally more durable, shock absorbent and provide better grip.

Security: Shoes should be secured on the feet with laces, straps or buckles – especially walking shoes. If your feet have to work to hold your shoes in place, your foot muscles may be strained and result in foot fatigue.

Shape: Pointy shoes can make your toes 'claw'. This may affect overall body posture. Clenched toes can cause rubbing, leading to corns and calluses. Broad-toed shoes allow the toes more room and can help prevent pressure injuries.

Firm Heel Counter and Adequate Heel Height: The back of the shoe should not be prone to crushing or collapsing. Heel height no greater than 2½ cms (1 inch). Broad base gives greater stability. High heels increase pressure on the ball of the foot, leading to spinal problems and excessive forces of the forefoot joints.

A Stiff Sole: Your shoes should have a well-padded sole. A cushioned sole absorbs shock and reduces pressure on the feet. The shoe should only bend or flex across the ball of the feet. There should be only minimal twist through the midsole of the shoe.

Toe Clearance: The sole should be curved upwards at the toe end of the shoe. This will make it easier for the foot to roll forward. Toe clearance is known to prevent trips and falls. There should be 1/2-inch space from the end of your longest toe to the end of the shoe.

Toe Box: The toe box should be deep and wide enough to allow toes to move and spread naturally.



Fact Sheet

Footwear Assessment and Advice

How your Podiatrist can help?

Appropriate footwear at any age can assist with confidence, stability and mobility.

If you are still not sure if the shoes are right for you, some good shoe shops may allow you to bring the shoes to your next podiatry appointment for discussion. The shoes must only be worn on carpet and for a return they must be returned "as new". Check with your shoe shop.

As podiatrists, we have each spent time either working or volunteering at local shoe stores in order to stay up to date with latest shoe trends.

We also have regular contact with some of Melbourne's best shoe stores, so we can help you find the right shoes, ensure they will fit well and make sure they will last a long time.

Our preferred shoe suppliers are:

- Josephines (Hampton)
- Comfort and Fit (Elsternwick)
- Active Feet (Sandringham)
- Athlete's Foot

It is important to bring to your appointment all your high use shoes, ie. casual and work shoes you wear regularly, as well as your sports shoes and running shoes.



Highett
Podiatry

ALWAYS CONSULT A TRAINED PROFESSIONAL

The information in this resource is general in nature and is only intended to provide a summary of the subject matter covered. It is not a substitute for medical advice and you should always consult a trained professional practising in the area of medicine in relation to any injury or condition. You use or rely on information in this resource at your own risk and no party involved in the production of this resource accepts any responsibility for the information contained within it or your use of that information.