

Footwear Advice

Information for Podiatry Patients



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The aim of this leaflet is to help you recognise the features of footwear that will most likely offer a comfortable fit.

Footwear has a significant effect on all aspects of life:

- Protection, e.g., for diabetics through cushioning soles, steel toe caps for certain occupations
- Accommodation of foot orthoses to improve function- including removable insole.
- Adaptations improve function away from feet, e.g., rocker soles.
- Prevention of falls, with good grip on ground with non-slip soles.
- Prevention of biomechanical induced injury.
- Thermal regulation, to prevent complications from e.g., Raynaud's phenomenon.

It is vital that our footwear fits the purpose- walking; sports; terrain.

THE HEALTHY SHOE

Availability of product advice
Shoe retains its fitness for purpose



FOOTWEAR FITTING ADVICE



Ensure both shoes are on, correctly fastened and weight is evenly distributed on both feet. It is advisable to ask a friend or family member to help.



If the purchaser uses any form of orthotic or insole inside the footwear these must be in place before the fit assessment is conducted. Half a size bigger may be required to accommodate the orthotic, or remove the existing shoe insole to make more room.



Elasticated gussets or laces must be under some tension to grip the foot but not fully stretched.



There must be a minimum of 6mm, preferably 10mm, in front of the longest toe- which might be the 1st or the 2nd toe.



When drawing a thumb across the forepart of the footwear there should be a slight rippling of the material but not a significant crease that would indicate the shoe is too wide.

The toplines of the footwear should be neatly against the sides of the feet with no pressure on bony protrusions such as the ankle bone or the top of the heel curve.

When walking , check that:

- The shoe grips the foot and does not slip
- The sole flexes easily in the front of the foot
- The heel provides a stable platform
- The outsole does not slip on the surfaces the wearer will normally be walking on
- The upper material flexes with the foot and returns to its original shape
- No pinching or pressure is felt by the wearer whilst walking

As we get older, or if we have a chronic health condition, this will have an impact on the type of shoes we should choose. Arches may collapse or lose their integrity, toes may claw, bunions may appear and our fatty pads on the ball of our feet may become thinner. This can result in foot pain from joint deformity, but also from poor shoe fitting.

Points to consider when selecting shoes:

- Swelling: Fluid accumulation means that shoes should have an easy, long opening to get feet in, and not too high around the ankle. Adjustable straps and elasticated laces may be useful as is the upper of the shoe, which may be made of for example elastane.
- Bunions: Check the upper of the shoe and ensure it's not too tight over bunions. Ensure that there are no seams or stitches rubbing over them. Preferable materials are leather uppers, elastane uppers for extra stretch over the bunions. Some shoe companies provide greater depth and width.
- Lesser toe deformities: Ensure there is enough 'wobble room' for toes, and if arthritis is present, buy shoes with cushioning soles, which absorb impact on the joints. Cushioning means that they are often lighter, yet still hard wearing.
- Denuded fatty pad leading to metatarsalgia (forefoot pain)
- A removable insole- if wearing insoles/orthotics.
- 'Flat feet' do they 'roll in'?
- Poor foot posture?
- Pain in ankles, knees, and spine?

Search terms when browsing the Internet for purchasing footwear:

- Wide fitting
- Wide forefoot footwear
- Rocker footwear
- Diabetic footwear
- Walking boots/shoes/trainers/sandals
- Orthopaedic footwear

Specific health issues:

- Diabetes: Care is required to comply with good shoe guidelines in light of potential poor circulation, neuropathy and greater risk of infection.
- Arthritis: Osteoarthritis responds well to thicker /firmer soles, with more of a stable rocker to aid with propulsion. Rheumatoid Arthritis may lead to heightened sensitivity to pressure and weight so lighter, more flexible shoes often help.

LACES: There isn't just one way to do up laces!

How to Lace Shoes for the Perfect Fit

Narrow feet

Tightens the shoe
more than usual techniques



Narrow heel + wide forefoot

Opens up at the heel
when necessary - holds the shoe



Heel slipping

Creates a clasp at the
heel and secures your heel in place



Toe pains

Creates more space - use more laces towards
toe area



Too tight on top

Reduces pressure on the top of
the foot - loosens up the top



One area too tight

If one area is too tight,
you can always skip it



Flat feet

A fuller lacing loop provides
a great support for the arches



Swollen Feet

Perfect technique to secure your feet
and keep them comfy when they swell



Wide forefoot

Opens up and gives
your forefoot more space



Wide feet in general

Loosens the entire shoe
and gives your feet space



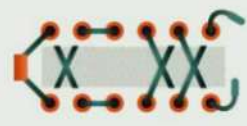
High midfoot

By skipping one or two laces,
you give your midfoot space



High arches

Strong 'high arches' -
this lacing technique will help



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Date implemented: Month year

Last review: Month year

Review date: (maximum of two years from last reviewed)

Leaflet No. e.g. CHS/MSK/01 Edition (1, 2, 3, etc - new edition every change)