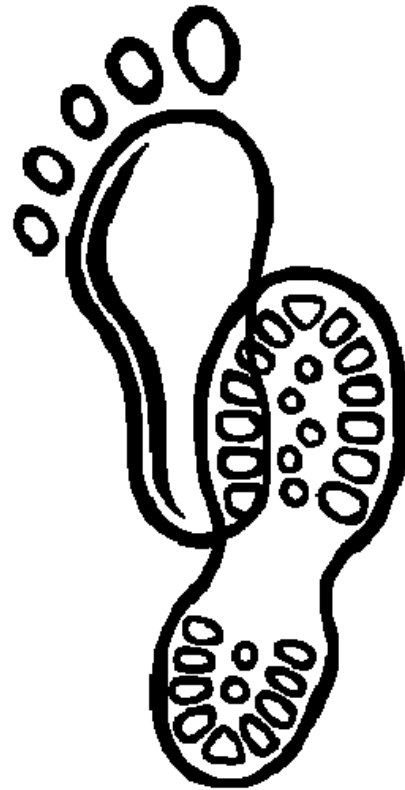


Choosing good footwear



Why is good footwear important?

Shoes communicate to your foot the type, quality and stability of the surface that you are walking on. Shoes also provide protection for your foot and ankle from the elements on the ground.

While, good footwear provides protection and stability, poor footwear can play a significant role in the development of many foot and ankle problems and make many existing problems worse.

If you suffer from conditions such as diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis or neuropathy, the skin on your feet is vulnerable and at risk of damage. Good footwear is extremely important and can help prevent skin ulcers, blisters, corns and callosities.

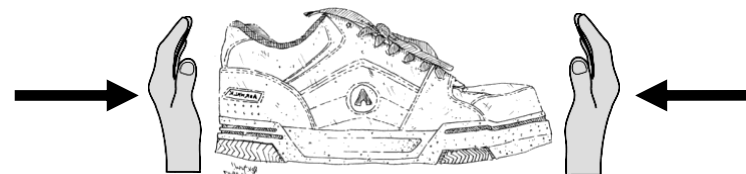
Good quality shoes or boots are very effective at limiting joint movement and this helps reduce the pain from stiff, arthritic joints in the foot and ankle. Shoes with leather uppers (the top part of the shoe) can be stretched by a cobbler to accommodate lumps and bumps such as claw toes or bunions. Shoes that fit properly are comfortable and may prevent problems from occurring. They will allow you to walk further and last longer before reaching your limit.

Features of Good Shoes and Boots

- A low-heeled shoe is usually better than a high heel (less than 1 ¼ inches).
- Shoes with laces or straps are better than slip-on shoes.
- Shoes that do not have prominent seams. Seams can rub on the skin of your foot and cause damage.
- Shoes made of natural materials such as leather will adjust to the shape of your foot more effectively than artificial ones.
- Shoes that are the correct fit are likely to be more comfortable and less likely to cause problems.
- Shoes with a stiff sole provide better support, limit joint movement and can prevent foot pain.

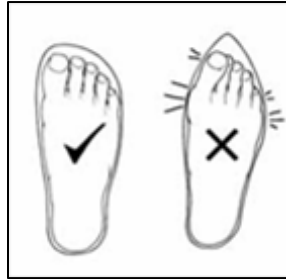


This shoe is too flexible and should be avoided.



A sufficiently stiff shoe does not bend when it is held in the hands and pushed in from both ends.

- Lace up boots can provide stability for arthritic or unstable ankle and heel joints.
- The front of the shoe should be 'foot shaped' and allow enough room for your toes. Narrow shoes can pinch the toes, causing pressure and pain. The image on the left is correct and the one on the right is too tight and causing the toes to overlap.



Sometimes people require footwear to be made for them because of the shape of their foot. A podiatrist, orthotist or orthopaedic surgeon may decide that your foot requires special footwear to be made.

What should I be considering when buying new shoes?

There are some things that you should think about if you are going to buy a new pair of shoes.

- Have your feet measured regularly. Your shoe size can change as you grow older. The feel of the shoe on your foot is more important than its specific size number. The shoe should fit your foot-shape not the other way around.
- When trying on a new pair of shoes, try to do so later in the day. This will ensure you get the right size as our feet are slightly more swollen later in the day.
- Always try on new shoes on both feet and with the socks that you would normally wear.
- You should be standing during the fitting process and check that there is approximately 1cm space at the end of each shoe.
- The shoes should have an adequate space for the balls of your feet and the heels should have minimal slippage.
- If you have orthotics (insoles), look for shoes that have a removable insole. Before you buy the shoes, remove the insole and insert your orthotics instead to ensure your feet still fit comfortably. You may need a larger size than normal due to the orthotics.
- If you use ankle supports, bring these with you when purchasing new shoes. You may need a larger size than normal because of the supports.
- Walk around the shop to make sure the shoes fit and feel comfortable to move in.
- Do not purchase shoes that feel too tight with the expectation that they will stretch.
- Wear new shoes around the house at first for short periods. Check your feet for any areas of redness, whiteness or rubbing. Gradually increase the amount of time you spend in new shoes.

Advice for specific conditions

The advice below contains suggestions for the type of shoes that can benefit certain foot and ankle conditions. The suggestions are not

exhaustive and may not benefit everybody. Further advice can be sought from a chiropodist, podiatrist, orthotist or orthopaedic surgeon.

- If you have delicate skin or altered sensation on your feet e.g. diabetic neuropathy, it is important to check your feet before and after you have worn shoes. Tight-fitting, 'fashionable' shoes can rub producing blisters and ulcers.
- Toe arthritis – Shoes with a large toe box and curved end. These have plenty of space for stiff painful toes. A firm soled shoe with a rocker toe-end will also be protective.
- Foot arthritis – firm soled shoe with a curved, rocker-bottom sole.
- Flat foot – arch support insole, or shoes with supportive inners.
- Ankle and hindfoot arthritis, stiffness or previous fusions – sturdy, lace-up boots or rocker-bottom shoes.
- Ankle instability – sturdy, lace-up boots.



***Important**



Note*:



Shoes with a curved sole are less stable than normal shoes and should be used with caution if you have an unsteady way of walking or have poor balance.

Nick Savva

April 2020