

Footwear

This leaflet is intended to provide simple practical information about wearing suitable shoes in order to keep your feet comfortable.

What is a good shoe?

The shoe should be the correct length, width and depth for your foot. There should be 1 cm or 0.5 inches between the end of your longest toe and the end of your shoe.

The upper should be soft with no hard seams or ridges and be made from a natural fibre such as leather which allows moisture to evaporate.

The shoe needs to hold your foot firmly in place with an adjustable fastening, i.e. laces, straps with buckles or Velcro.

The toe box should be round and deep to give the toes room to move.

The heel should be less than 4cm or 1.5 inches high, broad and stable.

The shoe needs a firm heel counter that fits snugly around the back of the heel and helps to maintain and stabilise the heel in place as the shoe makes contact with the ground.

Ideally the shoe will have a thick, lightweight, flexible rubber sole of a non-slip material.

What is a bad shoe?

A “slip on” or court shoe which is kept on the foot by curling the toes. Slip-on shoes have to be wedged on to stay on the foot and this can damage the toes or cause corns and callus.

A pointed toe box, which will squash your toes together and can cause bony deformity.

A heel that is too high and will cause the foot to be pushed to the end of the shoe, crushing the toes.

A shoe made of plastic, which will cause your foot to sweat.

A thin, hard sole, which will not cushion your foot comfortably.

Buying shoes

Always shop at a store with trained staff to advise you.

Always have your feet measured.

When trying on shoes, always wear the socks or stockings you anticipate wearing most often with them and also any inserts or insoles.

Always try on both shoes and fit your longest foot. Remember, your big toe is not always the longest!

If your feet tend to swell, shop for shoes later in the day.

Your shoes should fit properly from new. They should not need ‘breaking in’.

Choose footwear suitable for the occasion, for example, a trainer if you are going to play sport.

Expensive shoes that fit badly may cause foot problems. Remember that price does not always determine good fit.

The human foot consists of 26 bones, which do not fully set until we are around 18 years old; therefore the shoes we wear as children are vital to our future foot health.

However, we can still do enormous damage to our adult feet by wearing the wrong shoes.

Choosing the right shoes is important for everyone, but especially so if you suffer from foot problems.

Many minor foot ailments can be relieved with a properly fitted and carefully selected shoe.

A guide to help you when buying a pair of shoes

Using a piece of paper or thin cardboard, get somebody to draw around your foot whilst standing.

Take a pair of scissors and carefully cut out the shape of your foot.

Place this cut out shape into your shoe. If the edges curl, then your shoe is not fitting correctly.

Take this cut out with you when buying shoes as a useful guide.

You can search for other information leaflets on www.feetforlife.org

It is recommended that you follow the advice in this leaflet and only contact the podiatry department should you need further advice about your footwear.

If you are aged between 19-60 years you will need a G.P. referral

Please contact the Podiatry Appointment Office
01803 217712

If you:
--require further information
--require this leaflet in a different format

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.

PATIENT INFORMATION

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Department of Podiatry and
Foot Health