

Footwear Advice for Patients

Footwear

The majority of foot complaints can be helped or resolved with a good style and fit of footwear. Corns and callus or toe nail problems will reoccur if there is pressure from your shoes. Overuse injuries, soft tissue strains, and problems with balance or stability all need a supportive, stable shoe to get better.

A good shoe does not have to be expensive but the style is important.

Try to buy shoes in the afternoon but when your feet are not too tired and swollen, this will make it easier to achieve a good fit.

When buying shoes, check that there are no seams that will rub your toes and cause blisters or corns.

Always try on both shoes and walk around the shop in the new shoes. Check that you can move your toes while standing.

It is a good idea to have your feet measured as your feet do not always stay the same size throughout your life. Also, be aware that different makes of shoe can vary in size.

Slip-on shoes should be avoided for regular daily wear as they fit more tightly to the foot and place more pressure on the foot (otherwise the shoe would fall off). This pressure can cause the development of corns and callus.

Things to look for when choosing a new pair of shoes:

Depth - look at depth of the toe box (the front of the shoe, where your toes fit). Make sure there is no pressure on your toes as this can cause corns. If you have a hammer or clawed toe you will need a deeper toe box.

Make sure you can wiggle your toes freely, especially when standing.

Width and Shape - your shoe may be wide enough across the ball of your foot, but it must also be rounded in the toe box. A tapered toe box (i.e. pointed toe shoes) will crush toes together leading to painful corns. Look at the width and shape of your feet; are the shoes the same shape or are your feet going to be squashed inside?

Length - always allow room for your longest toe and make sure you have room to wiggle your toes, but do not buy shoes that are too long as the foot may slide backwards and forwards in shoe causing trauma to the toes and toe nails.

Fasteners - lace-up shoes generally provide the best fit so are ideal. Open the laces to take the shoes off and retie the laces each time you put them on. The secure, high fastening will hold your feet in a good position inside the shoe.

Buckles or Velcro fasteners are useful for people who have problems with tying laces. The fastener should hold your foot securely inside the shoe when you walk and the heel should not move out of the shoe when standing on tip toes.

Materials - Soft leather uppers are best; these will allow the skin to breathe and keep the feet dry in wet weather.

Choose a shock absorbing lightweight sole for comfort and flexibility.

Vary your footwear with the weather

Cold wet days - try fur lined boots to keep your feet warm and dry.

Hot sunny days - sandals can help to keep your feet cool; they should have cushioned soles and fasteners to hold your feet in position. Take extra care to avoid an injury to your feet whilst they are more exposed.

Slippers

Slippers offer little support to your feet so should only be worn for short periods or periods of inactivity to keep the feet warm.

Follow the same guidelines when buying slippers as you would for shoes. Badly fitting slippers can also cause problems.

Wear a comfortable pair of shoes around the house while you are active and on your feet.



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