

PROPER FOOTWEAR CAN *Reduce* FOOT PROBLEMS

Through the centuries, footwear has been designed to meet mankind's real and perceived needs - protection, support, comfort, sturdiness and stylishness. Feet endure tremendous pressures of daily living. An average day of walking brings a force equal to several hundred tons on them. They are subject to more injury than any other part of the body, underscoring the need to protect them with proper footwear. Foot pain is NOT normal.

Children's Shoes

When a child begins to walk, shoes generally are not necessary. Allowing an infant to go barefooted indoors, or to wear only a pair of socks, helps the foot grow normally and develop its muscles and strength, as well as the grasping ability of toes.

As children grow more active, and their feet develop, the need for shoes becomes apparent. It becomes necessary to change shoe sizes at a pace that frequently surprises and even dismays parents, to allow room for growth.

Women's Shoes

Women inflict more punish-

ment on their feet in part from improper footwear than can bring about unnecessary foot problems. Some of the problems result from high-heeled shoes that are above two inches in height. I believe such heels are medically unsound and attribute postural and even safety problems to their use. To relieve the abusive effects of high heels, women can limit the time they wear them, alternating with good

quality sneakers or flats for part of the day. They can also vary heel height. There are comfortable attractive "walking" pumps (also called "comfort" or performance pumps") for work and social activities, that blend fashion considerations and comfort. These pumps offer athletic shoe-derived construction, reinforced heels,

and wider toe room. Perhaps the best shoe for women is a walking shoe with laces (not a slip-on), a polymerized composition sole, and a relatively wider heel with a rigid and padded heel counter, no more than three-quarters of an inch in height.

Men's Shoes

The best shoes for men are good quality oxford styles, shoes ordinarily associated

with wing-tip or cap toe designs. Also suitable are slip-ons, dressy loafers, and low dress boots.

Flip Flops

Flip flops bring on their own set of problems, as do flats. Shoes that do not provide any arch support allow a foot to act as if it were barefoot. While this is recommended in children who are just

learning to walk, adults need shoes with good support to assist their feet in carrying the body's weight and force.

Shoes for Athletics

Sports-specific athletic shoes are a wise investment for serious athletes, though perhaps a less critical consideration for the weekend or occasional athlete. Probably a more important consideration is the condition of the shoe - don't wear any sport or other shoes beyond their usual life. Athletic footwear should be fitted to hold the foot in the position that's most natural to the movement involved.

We all know that when your feet hurt, you hurt all over, but when we neglect listening to our body's complaints, we allow small problems to progress into big problems and that is when you need to see your podiatrist.

*Flip Flops can
be Even Worse...*



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