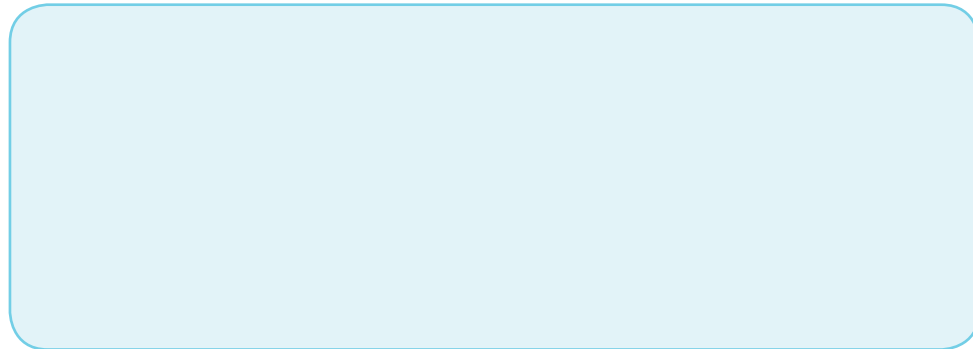


Personal advice



Contact us:

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Help us get it right

If you have a complaint, concern, comment or compliment please let us know by speaking to a member of our staff. We learn from your feedback and use the information to improve and develop our services.

If you would like to talk to someone outside the service contact the **Patient Experience Team** on **0113 220 8585**, Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm or email lch.pet@nhs.net

We can make this information available in Braille, large print, audio or other languages on request.

References

Assessment of the Lower Limb. L. Merriman & D. Tollafield. Churchill Livingstone.
Neal's Disorders of the Foot: Diagnosis & Management. D. Lorimer, G. French, M. O'Donnell, G. Burrow. Churchill Livingstone

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Leeds Community Podiatry Service

Choosing Everyday Footwear



Introduction

Feet have a rough time of it. They carry us the equivalent of five times around the earth in an average lifetime, yet we give them less attention than they deserve and we rarely wear the best shoes for our feet. This guide shows you what to look for when buying shoes.

Heel:

- Flatter shoes are best, particularly if you are on your feet a lot.
- Heels should no higher than 1½" and have a wide base.

Depth:

- The width and depth of the shoe is especially important, to allow room for your toes and prevent pressure areas.

Length:

- Make sure you fit the shoe to the largest foot.

Width (see diagram opposite):

- a 'round' spacious toe area is recommended to avoid pressure on problem areas

Sole:

- Look for a thick flexible outer sole as this provides a cushion between you and the ground and acts as a shock absorber.

Trainers:

- Trainers are a good choice if the upper is made of leather.

Insole:

- Some shoes have an insole that can be removed. This will allow for a specially made corrective or cushioning insole to be fitted into your shoe.

Material:

- A shoe with a soft leather upper is preferable and allows the foot to 'breathe'.
- Avoid stitching over prominent bones.
- Check that the leather has been stiffened around the heel for support.

Fastenings:

- Shoes and sandals with adjustable straps, laces or velcro fastenings help hold the foot in a good position.

New shoes:

- If you have a tendency to have problems with new shoes, you may find it helpful to wear them for short periods at first.

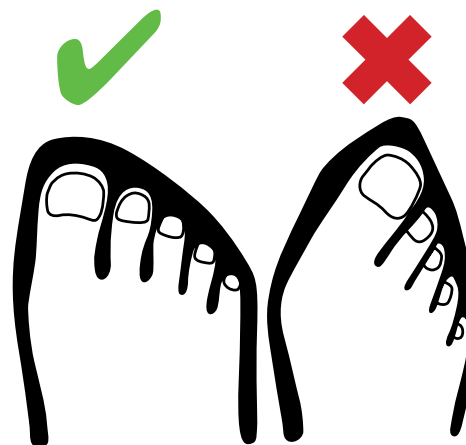
Soft padded collars

Soft leather uppers with virtually seam free linings for total comfort

Removable padded insole for total comfort

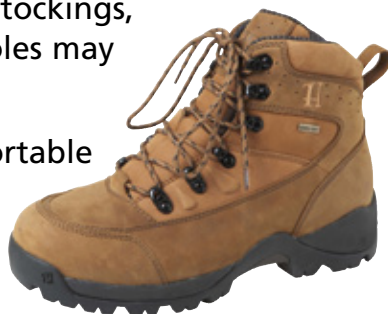
Lightweight flexible soles to cushion every step

Guide to shoe width



Footwear fitting

- Footwear which have laces, straps, buckles or velcro are more supportive and stay on your feet better. Footwear which is not held firmly onto your feet can be hazardous and cause falls.
- Consider having your feet measured, they may have become wider over the years, or changed shape. It is recommended to have your feet measured whilst standing as they tend to splay out when we stand.
- There should be at least 1cm (½ inch) of room in the shoe beyond the longest toe. Always select the size to fit your larger foot, if there is a difference.
- Try shoes on with the type of socks, stockings, insoles you normally wear. Some insoles may need shoes with more depth.
- The right shoes for you will be comfortable when you first try them on. Buying shoes to 'break in' later is not a good idea.
- Shop for shoes later in the afternoon if your feet tend to swell - this will be when they are at their largest.
- Avoid having your shoes fitted at the weekend when retailers are often most busy and therefore are unable to provide full attention.
- Avoid wearing your new shoes outdoors until you are certain they are comfortable. If they are uncomfortable, the retailer will be more likely to exchange them for you if they have only been worn indoors on carpeted floors.



Socks and hosiery

Good socks will not only help keep your feet comfortable within your shoes, but will also keep them dry by drawing moisture away from the feet.

If you have problems with circulation or swelling, try to avoid socks with tight elastic tops. There are wider soft top socks available for such conditions.

Regularly check your socks and discard worn out or misshapen socks

Always check toe seams for a knobbly casting off knot – particularly in children's socks. There are now socks manufactured from one piece of material without a toe seam.

Avoid hosiery which is too tight across your toe area.



Useful sources of further information

British Footwear Association
01933 229 005
www.britfoot.com

Hotter Shoes
01695 213 213
www.hottershoes.com

Ecco
0808 101 7442 www.ecco.com/uk

Cosyfeet
01458 447 275 www.cosyfeet.com

Simply Feet
0845 370 0380
www.simplyfeet.co.uk

Walktall
www.walktall.co.uk

Crispins Orthopaedic / Bespoke shoes
0113 252 8866

Taycare Bespoke footwear
0113 231 1800

Protect your feet at work

It is not unusual for problems to arise within the foot, lower leg and back as a result of working on hard unyielding surfaces for long periods, especially if you are wearing hard soled footwear with no shock absorption.

In a normal working day, the working foot can easily travel several miles and just standing still can also put a lot of strain on your feet and legs. If you are on your feet a lot, you should wear well-fitting, comfortable footwear with cushioning and flexible soles.



Tips for working feet

Wear footwear that is appropriate for your job and suitable for the conditions.

Wear safety footwear if your job requires or recommends it. Always have two pairs of footwear on the go alternating on a daily basis so that any perspiration can dry out properly.

Wearing different footwear can also prevent pressure areas.

If you work on slippery surfaces it is important to wear footwear with slip resistant soles.

If there is a danger of nails or sharp objects – wear puncture resistant soles.



Many foot problems can be made worse by wearing ill-fitting footwear.

The wearing of high heels can:

- Increase the weight taken by the ball of the foot, which may lead to calluses, painful bunions, corns and deformity.
- Push the entire mass of the body forwards, causing the spine to bend backwards to compensate. This can lead to back and lower limb problems.
- Create a higher ankle position, particularly with a narrow heel width which can cause instability and ankle sprains.
- Wearing high-heels for long periods – more than 6 months – may cause long term shortening / tightening of the calf muscles. The person compensates for this tightness of the calf muscle by lowering the arch of the foot, this can affect the knee, hip or back.

Slippers

Many people wear slippers at home because they are easy to put on, and are soft and comfortable. However, well-worn slippers may not give much support to the foot so may contribute to trips and falls. The soles may also have little cushioning leading to pain in your feet.

- When buying slippers, look for ones that have a cushioned sole, and ideally a fastening to hold them securely on the foot.
- Alternatively, try wearing a comfortable, well-fitting shoe reserved for indoor use instead.
- Avoid mules - they give the foot little support and can lead to falls.

Falls

If you have a history of falling within the last six months or any problems with your balance, you should ensure that your footwear is suitable and any that isn't should be discarded. You should also discuss this with your GP or healthcare professional.