

Solid Footwear Choices: How to be a Shoe-In!

They carry us over ten thousand steps or five miles each day, yet how much attention do we really pay our feet? Stuffed into dress shoes or construction boots, our feet must bear forces of up to one and a half times our body's weight when we walk. So, is it any wonder that many of us experience tender tootsies at the end of the day?

Made up of twenty-six bones and thirty-three joints, our feet are designed to adapt to different terrain or surfaces while providing the rest of the body with a sturdy base of support. It's not surprising that a sore, overworked pair of feet can lead to disorders and pain in other areas, including the ankles, knees, hips and back. Consider the following questions:

Have you recently experienced any of the following:

1. Heel pain?
2. Morning stiffness or discomfort in your feet or legs?
3. Blisters or calluses on your feet?
4. Bunions?
5. Aching in your shins, made worse by walking?
6. Thigh pain that is worse after activity or climbing up and down stairs?
7. Ankle sprains?
8. Knee pain?
9. Low back pain made worse by prolonged standing or walking?
10. Burning sensations in your feet?

If you answered yes to one or more of the above questions, you could be experiencing pain related to excessive stress on your feet. For a thorough assessment of your feet and footwear needs, consult your chiropractor.

Since we all want to put our best foot forward, we must take steps to ensure that our feet have the cushioning and support they need. Whether you wear dress shoes, loafers, safety boots, or sneakers, exercising some simple tips can help take a load off your feet:

Shoe Shopping

When buying footwear, do so in the afternoon or evening, since our feet tend to expand throughout the day. When shopping, wear the type of socks you would normally use while wearing the shoes you're buying, and be sure to try on both shoes, since one foot can often be slightly larger than the other. If the shoes are uncomfortable in the store, don't buy them and assume you'll be able to break them in later.

Dress Shoes and Safety Boots

Certain types of shoes, like dress shoes and safety boots provide very little support and cushioning, which can be tough on the feet, particularly if you spend your day walking on hard surfaces, like concrete or tile. A cushioned insole may help reduce the pressure on the joints of your feet.

Running Shoes

Although sneakers and running shoes generally offer more cushioning than loafers and work boots, not all feet are created equal, and so, it is important to choose shoes appropriate for your foot type and particular needs. Do you know what type of feet you have?

Most people have low arches, which allow the feet to roll inwards excessively or over-pronate when walking. This places stress on the soles of the feet, ankles, and knees, which can result in conditions like knee pain and plantar fasciitis or heel pain caused by inflammation of the connective tissue along the soles of the feet. If you have low arches, you would benefit from shoes with a straight sole that can provide you with extra support.

People with high arches tend to place too much pressure on the outside of the feet or over-supinate when walking, resulting in rigid or tight foot muscles and joints, which can lead to problems including ankle, knee and low back pain. If you have high arches, you would likely benefit from shoes that curve inwards at the insole to provide you with extra cushioning and shock absorption when you walk.

Since finding a pair of shoes that meets all our specific needs is difficult, many people use custom-made foot orthotics to help improve their foot function and comfort levels. Orthotics are shoe inserts custom molded to your feet and designed to compensate for mechanical faults, such as high or low arches. Most

orthotics are compact enough to fit into virtually any type of shoe and can be transferred from one shoe to another. Studies suggest that orthotics are effective in treating and preventing conditions, including foot pain, plantar fasciitis, knee pain and arthritis, as well as low back pain [1-4]. A well-designed set of orthotics can help ensure that your feet get the support they need regardless of which type of shoe you wear.

If you experience discomfort or problems related to your feet, your chiropractor can help.

Doctors of chiropractic are specialists trained to treat and prevent disorders of the spine and extremities. They also provide gentle, hands-on treatment to the joints and soft tissues, which has been shown to improve mobility and function. Your chiropractor can provide advice and information about the types of footwear that would best suit your needs, and can also diagnose and treat many foot-related problems.

References:

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