



Suffolk Podiatry Footwear Advice

Why is footwear so important?

Having the right footwear is important for maintaining good foot health especially if you are having problems with your feet. The correct shoe is essential as your footwear may be contributing to your condition. Be aware that if you have been advised to wear an insole, they only work well in shoes that fit properly.

For some people, changing your footwear is the only treatment you need, to have pain free feet.

What makes a good shoe?

Room for your toes

A good shoe should have about 1cm of free space at the end of the longest toe. There should be enough depth and width in the toe box to allow you to freely wiggle your toes without touching the lining.



Good Fastening (Laces or Straps)

A good shoe should hold the foot firmly at the heel and ankle, with a fastening that prevents the foot from sliding forward. Laces are always the “gold standard” because you can adjust the fit of the shoe easily. A Velcro strap is a good substitute if you cannot manage laces.

Removable foot bed.

This allows more room in the shoe to fit an insole. Some manufacturers almost always have removable foot beds, whereas others will clearly label this on their websites.

The Heel and Sole

Heels should have a broad base with firm heel counters. Soles should be cushioning with enough grip (or tread) to prevent slipping. Heels should be no greater than 2.5cm in height.

So, why can't I wear slip on shoes?

For a slip-on shoe to stay in place, it must be tight enough to grip the foot. Slip-on shoes will squeeze the toes, either because they are designed that way, or because the foot is able to slide forward in the shoe causing the toes to rub. You may also claw your toes to hold a loose shoe in place. Lace-up shoes hold the ankle securely so the toes don't have to work as hard.

Slip-on Shoes & Insoles

Wearing an insole in a slip-on shoe, may result in the heel slipping at the back or it may make the shoes too tight to wear comfortably. For this reason, insoles are not suitable for slip-on shoes.

Advice for buying shoes

Size Does Matter

Studies suggest that up to 82% of patients wear shoes that are too small for them. If your foot pain goes away when wearing no shoes or when wearing sandals - this could be why. Shoe sizes vary slightly from factory to factory (even if the make is the same). For this reason, shoe sizes should only be a guide.

Tips for Buying Shoes

- Try on both shoes to see how they feel
- Don't buy shoes that pinch, rub or slip at the back
- Feet tend to swell a little during the day so try new shoes in the afternoon when your feet will be at their largest

Shoes for everyday use: Suitable for insoles and better for your feet

Fastening shoes with removable foot-bed, that allow plenty of room for the forefoot, are best for your feet.



Shoes for occasional use: Not suitable for insoles

High heels frequently result in blisters, corns and calluses as well as foot, knee and back pain.



Wellington boots are usually loose, poorly-fitting and non-breathable. For wet muddy walks, you are better wearing a waterproof walking boot.



Slip on shoes and sandals are often too tight and cause pain by squeezing the foot. If slip on shoes are too loose the toes must curl and grip to keep the shoes on the feet.



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