

Choosing Good Footwear



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“You cannot put the same shoe on every foot” Publilius Syrus



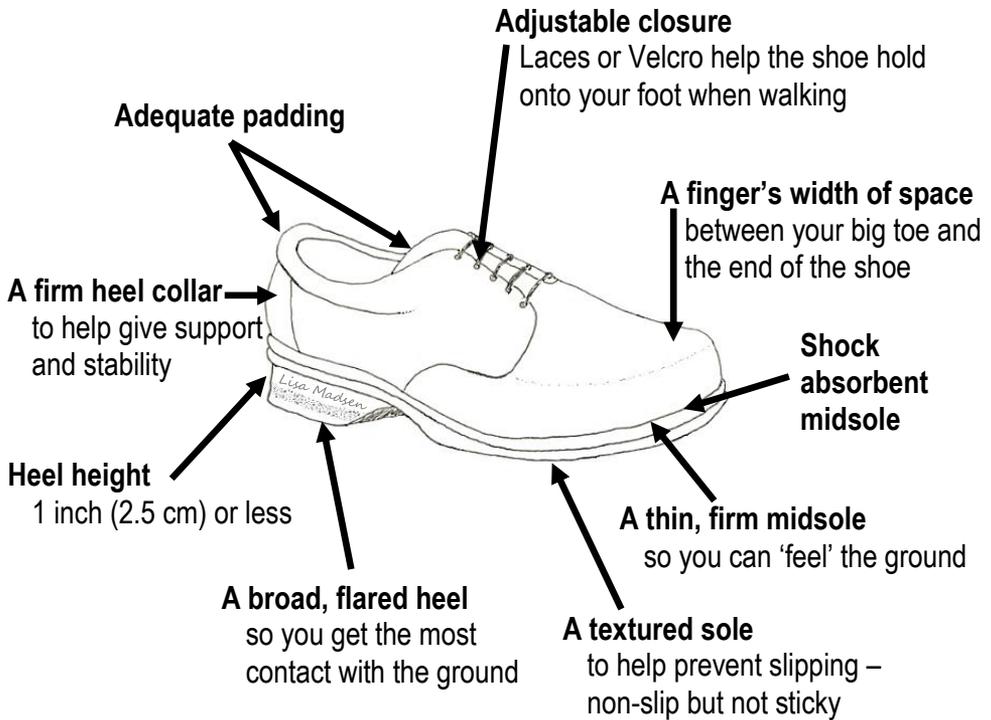
Make sure the Shoe Fits!

- Shoes should feel comfortable right away with no pressure points.
- You should not have to force your feet in or out of the shoe.
- Make sure the sides of the shoe are not hitting the ankle bone.
- Walk around the store for at least 10 minutes to get a feel for the shoes.
- While walking, check that your foot remains well-seated or firmly in the shoe. The shoe should not slip up and down in the heel area.
- Take the shoes off and check for areas of redness, pain, or rubbing from the shoes.
- Before wearing new shoes outside, wear them inside at home first to make sure they are comfortable.

Did you know?

One quarter of the bones in your body are in your feet.

Choosing a Safe Shoe



- Material:** What is the upper part made of?
A leather shoe will stretch a bit to your feet and can be spot-stretched over hammer toes or bunions by a shoemaker.
- Arch Support:** Is there good arch support?
To make sure the arch is strong enough, hold the shoe by the heel, then push the toe slightly up and toward back of the shoe. The shoe should bend at the toe area.
If it bends at the arch, don't buy it.

- **Insoles:** Are the insoles comfortable?
Choose a shoe with a removable insole if needing to wear orthotics.

- **Tongue:** Is the tongue big enough?
The tongue should be wide enough and padded enough so shoe laces don't dig into the top of your foot.

- **Toe Area:** Do you have enough space for your toes?
Adequate toe space is important. If you do not have enough toe space, it can lead to problems with hammer toes, bunions, corns, and calluses.

Our toes spread when we walk. The extra space prevents rubbing and irritation that can cause bruising or blistering.

Make sure you can wiggle your toes. A toe box of breathable material such as leather or cloth allows sweat to evaporate and helps keep feet drier during the day. Feel inside the toe box to make sure there are no stiff or scratchy seams.

- **Heel Area:** (also called heel collar or counter)
Is the heel collar firm?
This should be firm enough so that you cannot squeeze the sides between your thumb and fingers.

- **Sole:** Is the sole smooth or textured?

A textured sole prevents slips or falls. Firm crepe or rubber soles give you shock absorption.

Shoes with soles that have a greater area contacting the floor are more stable than shoes with a narrow sole. The sole should not be too thick. A thick sole can make it hard to feel any unevenness in the ground. This can affect your balance.

- **Fastening:** How are the shoes closed or fastened? Shoes with laces or Velcro help fit the shoe to the shape of your foot. This gives you more support and stability, as well as prevents your foot from sliding in the shoe.

Check to make sure the shoes are easy to put on and off. Round or elastic laces are a good choice. They tend to stretch more than flat laces.

- **Lining:** Is the shoe lined? Is there good padding at the tongue and around the heel collar?

Leather lining will stretch to the shape of your foot.

Lining should have as few seams as possible, especially over bony areas. There should be enough padding along the heel collar and edge of the tongue. Seams and edges can cause rubbing and irritation.

Good footwear is key to preventing falls and protecting your feet.

Tips for Shopping for Good Footwear

Where to shop

Shop where the salesperson is a skilled shoe fitter. You want someone who is knowledgeable about the footwear needs of people with health issues like swelling, diabetes, nerve damage, painful feet, or deformities. A skilled shoe fitter can explain the advantages and disadvantages of the shoe for your foot. Ask about the store's return policy in case the shoes are not comfortable.

When to shop

Shop for shoes in the afternoon when your feet are the largest.

What to bring

Bring your orthotics if you wear them. Wear the socks you normally wear. Bring your old shoes so the shoe fitter can look at the pattern of wear.

Sizing your feet

If your feet are different sizes, buy to fit the larger foot. There should be about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{5}{8}$ inch (1.2 to 1.6 cm) of room between your big toe and the end of the shoe when you are standing. Shoes should fit snugly without being too tight. Try shoes of different widths to get the correct width for you.

What not to choose

Stay away from:

- ✘ Backless shoes
- ✘ Open toe shoes
- ✘ Slip on shoes
- ✘ Shoes with pointed toes or high heels
- ✘ Shoes that touch the end or tops of your toes
- ✘ Slippers because they offer little or no support and often cause you to shuffle instead of walk properly



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This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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