



Australian Government  
Department of Health and Ageing

## Therapy Services Fact Sheet

### Footwear

Whenever someone walks into the Podiatry Clinic, the first thing a Podiatrist observes is their footwear.

Correct footwear is essential for efficient foot function. Otherwise our feet have to unwillingly compensate for incorrect footwear. This may lead to fatigue, corns, ulcers, and unnecessary wear and tear of the joints.

Choosing the correct footwear is very different for each individual according to their foot type, activities, height, weight and foot problems. Therefore, choosing the correct shoe can become quite complicated with all these variables.

This health promotion fact sheet is designed to outline some of the essential properties of a good shoe.

#### **Torsion**

A bad shoe will always twist longitudinally, allowing the foot to roll in (pronation) and roll out

(supination). A good shoe will not twist, therefore restricting this movement of your feet.

#### **Flex**

A good shoe will bend at the ball of the foot. A bad shoe will bend in other places as well. This places added stress on the foot, resulting in injury.

#### **Heel Counter**

The heel counter should be firm, to keep the heel upright.

#### **Comfort**

Obviously, the shoe must be comfortable. Do not be fooled by sales people telling you that your shoe will stretch and accommodate your feet. They must feel comfortable when you try them on at the shoe store.

A narrow toe area will apply pressure on the toes, which can cause pressure lesions, corns, calluses and even ingrown toenails.



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### Footwear (continued)

#### Width

Always ensure that you have approximately a thumb's width extra length beyond the longest toe.

#### Depth

Shoes should have adequate depth in the toe area, to prevent pressure on the tops of the toes (especially for those with hammer or claw toes).

#### Lace-Ups or Velcro Straps

These are always preferable in a shoe, as they will help to push the foot back into the heel and prevent forward slippage. This will give the heel and ankle joints more stability, when combined with a firm heel counter.

#### Leather

Try to choose a non-synthetic upper and lining in your shoes. Natural material will help the feet to breathe, and reduce excess sweating.

This information will help you to choose better shoes, but if you have any other questions concerning your feet, please feel free to ask your Podiatrist.

Please see below for some examples of good and bad torsion, flex and heel counter in footwear.

#### Correctly Supporting Shoe



#### Incorrectly Supporting Shoe

