

Choosing the Right Footwear

Many simple foot problems occur because of shoes that do not fit people's feet properly. To help prevent damage to your feet, try applying the following guidelines when you buy footwear, whether it is for adults or children.

Shoes should not need to be broken in. Shoes that fit well should fit comfortably straightaway. If shoes need to be broken in, they do not fit you and may cause injury.

When going to buy shoes take the socks with you that you normally wear and, also insoles that have been prescribed by the Podiatrist or your own insoles so you can make sure your feet will fit into the shoes properly with the insoles in place.

Always try on both shoes. Most people have one foot slightly larger than the other so make sure they fit your larger foot. If your feet tend to swell during the day, shop for shoes later in the day when your feet will be larger.

For maximum comfort, buy a shoe with adjustable fastening, such laces, strap, or buckle. This will help your foot feel secure and prevent it slipping about.

It is not the cost, but the fit that is important when buying shoes. Paying a lot for shoes will not necessarily make them fit better.

Generally, try to avoid wearing slippers which can become very sloppy or loose. These could be a trip hazard which could lead to falls and injury. You could try a light pair of shoes, following the above guidelines, for the house instead.

Choose the right shoes for the right occasion. If your daily activities mean you are on your feet then your shoes need to be appropriate. Save dress shoes for special occasions.

To see if a shoe will fit you can try a cardboard template. Whilst standing on a firm surface, place your foot onto a thin piece of cardboard and have someone to draw round your foot whilst you are stood upright. Cut out the template of your foot and try in any shoe you choose in the shop. If the

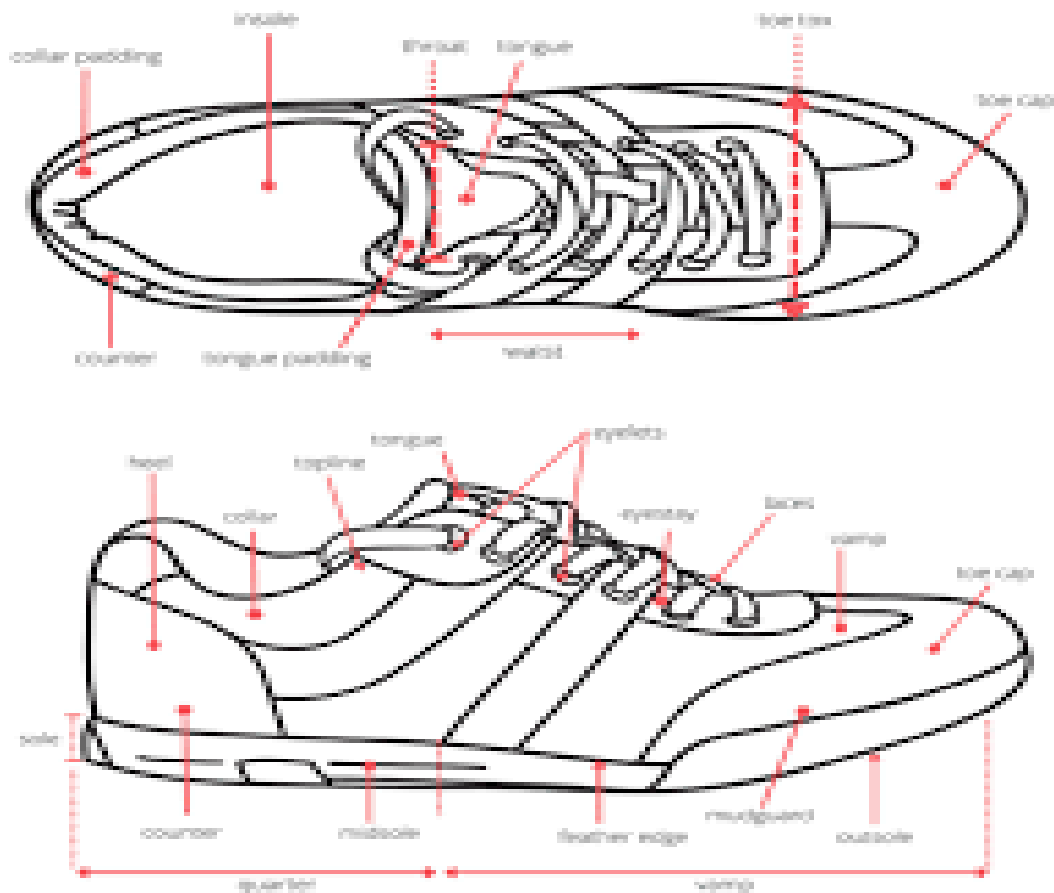
cardboard cannot lie flat or is squashed up in the toe box then the shoe is not going to fit properly.

What makes a Good Shoe?

With shoes it is all about fit and style, not necessarily the brand or even the cost. Sizes vary between manufacturer and are not universal so only use the size on the label as a rough guide. To find a well-fitting shoe consider the following:

Length- The right length of shoe should leave a small gap (thumb width) between the tip of your longest toe and the end of the shoe.

Width – This is measured across the balls of your feet not the toe part of the shoe. You need to ensure that you have the correct width fitting so that the toe box is wide enough to fit your toes without squashing them together.



Fastenings- This holds the foot in the shoe. Shoes should have laces, Velcro or buckles to keep them in place. Slip-on shoes should be avoided as these can become loose with wear and to maintain grip the toes are curled.

Toe Box- The toe of the shoe should match your foot shape (rounded or square) and be deep and wide enough to fit your toes. Avoid toe boxes that are tapering.

Heel- Ideally the heel should have a broad base and the heel height should be no greater than 4cm or approx. 1 1/5 inches.

Heel Counter- This grasps the heel of the foot at the sides and back, preventing the heel from sliding up and down while walking. Most importantly, it helps maintain the position of the heel on the ground. As the heel counter softens or breaks down and loses its shape and the shoe becomes supportive. When shoes become old and worn, replace them to make sure you get the correct support and prevent accidents.

Sole- The sole should not flat (as in the ballet pump style). It should have a gentle slope upwards under the toes (Rocker front) and it should be thickened/cushioning. It should also have good grip to prevent slipping and falls.

Upper- The material that forms the main part of the shoe covering the top of the foot. Ideally, it should be composed of natural materials such as leather or suede and should be soft with hard seams or stitching that could rub.

Lining- Found inside the shoe. It should be smooth and without seams.

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