

Spring is finally here and we can put away our winter boots. It's time to update our wardrobe and shop for new shoes! However, we must choose the proper ones, as ill-fitting shoes can lead to pain in the knees, hips and low-back. Your feet are the foundation of your body and deserve special attention. Did you know that 25% of the bones in your body are in your feet?

WHICH SHOES SHOULD WE CHOOSE?

Pay close attention to the size of your shoes. It isn't rare to have feet of different lengths. By trying on your shoes while standing, your foot will expand which will allow you to make sure that it's the right fit. Your foot should never be larger than the shoe and your toes must be able to move comfortably.

All shoes are different. Your ideal size may vary according to the model, even with the same company.

The material of your shoes is also important. Leather and nylon mesh allow the feet to breathe and insure better flexibility.

Avoid shoes with thin straps. Not only can they hurt your feet, but may also cause swelling as it digs into your skin.

Never buy shoes by convincing yourself they will be comfortable once « broken in ». Shoes must absolutely be comfortable from the moment you slip them on.

If you wear orthotics, it's essential that you bring them with you when you are trying on new shoes; they need to fit properly in them. Many shoes offer the option of removing the insole to allow you to replace it with your custom-made orthotic which increases comfort.

THE RULES OF HIGH HEELS

For many women, high heel shoes are hard to avoid. The following rules must be respected to stay comfortable:

Stick to heels that are a maximum of 5 cm high. It's a good compromise that gives the look of high heels, without shifting your body forward.

Place a cushion at the front of your shoe to protect your forefoot and avoiding that your toes get squished at the tip. High heels force your feet to bend forward and down, and makes the toes curl up. This may lead to shortening of the Achilles tendon and contraction of the calf muscle.

Wearing high heels increases the curve in the lower back, which creates pressure in the pelvis and lumbar area. Pain in your back, hips and knees can be caused by your shoes. So avoid wearing high heels every day; reserve them for special occasions.

RUNNING SHOES

The primary goal of a sport shoe is to protect the feet from the stress caused by the impact of running. A good running shoe will save you a lot of trouble!

Choose a store with knowledgeable staff. They must be able to advise you according to what type of activity you practice, your body type, your gait and the shape of your feet. To test their comfort, slip the shoes on in the store and jog inside the store. And don't forget to shop locally!

Invest in your health! Being frugal is not recommended when buying new shoes. A 20\$ shoe isn't designed to be worn all day, every day.

PRACTICAL TIPS

1. It's best to shop for footwear in the afternoon and evening. During the day, feet have a tendency of retaining fluid which makes them swell. Shoes that fit comfortably in the morning may be too tight in the afternoon.

2. Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy weight. Being overweight adds unnecessary pressure on your joints, especially of your feet, knees, hips and low-back.

3. Watch your posture. While standing, your head, shoulders, hips and ankles should stay naturally aligned. Your shoulders should stay low and relaxed.

Injuries due to ill-fitting shoes can affect your daily life. Your chiropractor can help with these problems. Doctor Gagnon can analyze your gait with computer-assisted technology and can build custom-made orthotics. By respecting these tips, you should be able to start the warm season... on the right foot!

Sources :

Association chiropratique canadienne, *Les talons hauts, Back facts : running shoes*
Association des chiropraticiens du Québec