

CU SPORTS MEDICINE

Tips on Selecting Foot-Friendly Shoes

Wearing the wrong shoes can cause a number of foot problems, including:

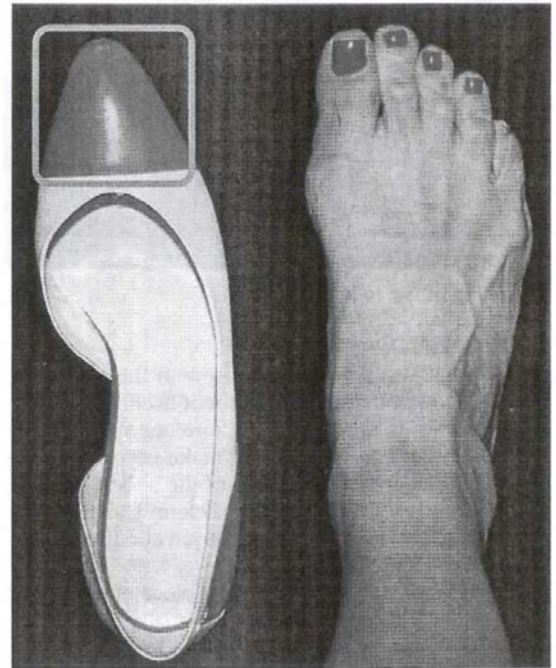
- Bunions (an unsightly bump at the base of the big toe)
- Hammertoes (an upward bending of one or two of the smaller toes)
- Corns or calluses

These and other common foot problems can cause considerable discomfort and may occasionally require surgery.

You can prevent most foot problems by wearing the “right” shoes. Following is a list of things to consider before you purchase your next pair of shoes.

What to Consider when Buying Shoes

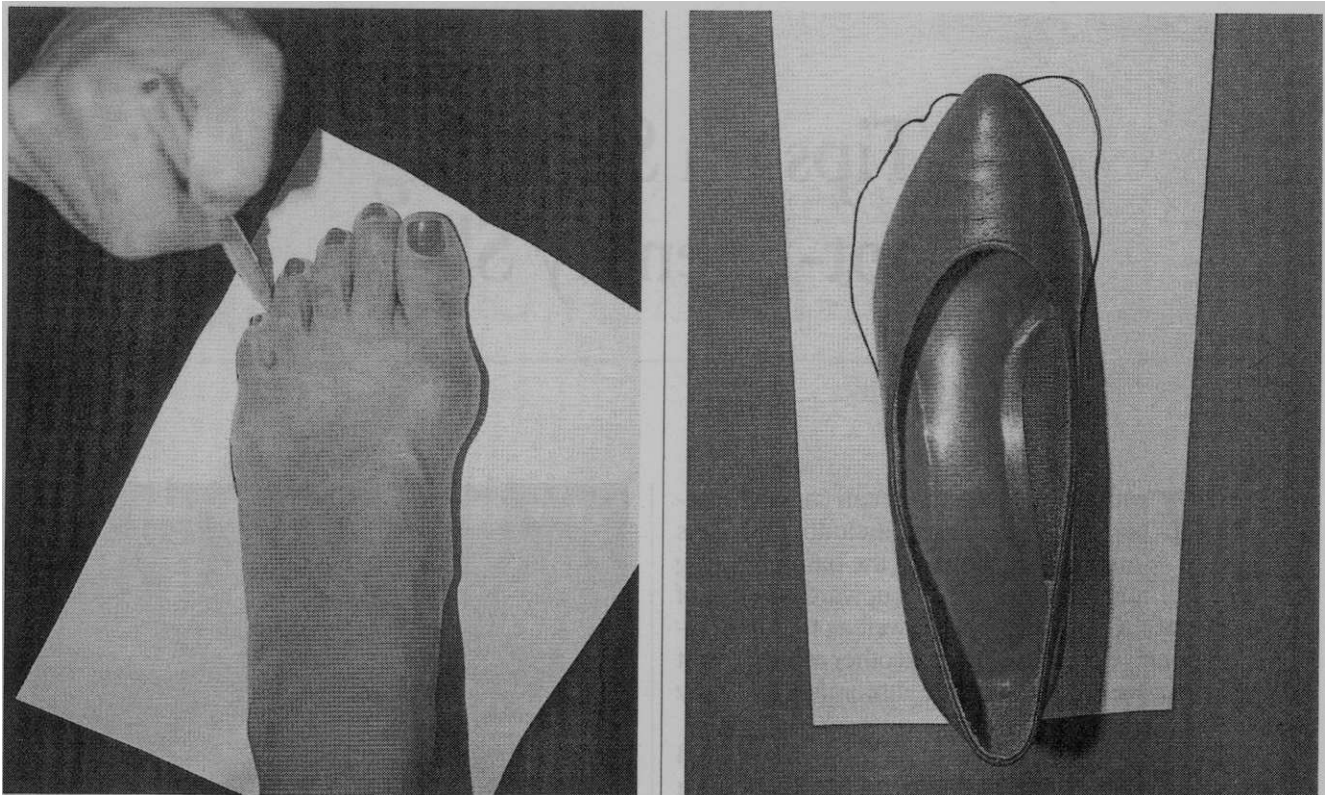
- Sizes vary among shoe brands and styles. Therefore, judge the shoe by how it fits and feels on your foot, not by the size marked on it.
- Do not shop with one shoe size in mind; if the next size up feels better, choose that one.
- Select a shoe that conforms as nearly as possible to the shape of your foot. Do not plan on shoes stretching with wear.
- Do not wear shoes with a heel higher than 2 inches. Heels higher than this put unnecessary pressure on the ankle and balls of the feet.
- If you already own shoes that are too tight, consider bringing them to your shoe repair shop to have them stretched.
- Because feet spread with weight bearing and become wider with age, it is important to have your feet measured regularly. Also, since most people have one foot larger than the other, have both feet measured, and fit your shoes to the larger foot.
- Shop for shoes late in the day. That is when your feet are the largest.
- Be sure to stand while trying on shoes to ensure enough space for your longest toe.
- Be sure to walk around in the shoes to ensure their overall comfort and fit.



Problem shoes can cause problem feet. *For example, the toe box of this shoe is much too narrow. As a result, a prominent bunion has developed on the woman's foot. Shoes with a wide toe box are least likely to cause bunion deformities.*

- Make sure the ball (or front region) of your foot fits comfortably into the shoe. You should be able to wiggle all of your toes comfortably.
- Your heel should fit snugly but comfortably in the shoe. Your heel should not be slipping a lot.
- Before you go shopping, be sure to do the “Forefoot Test” at home (below). The shoes you buy should be wider than your forefoot.

The Forefoot Test



Women’s shoes tend to be narrow in the forefoot. Sometimes they are narrower, in fact, than the foot itself. As a result, when a step is taken and the forefoot spreads, the bones, joints, and tissues that make up our feet are compressed against the inside of the shoes. This creates unnaturally high forces that may deform and injure our feet. To ensure that your feet are given adequate room, perform the following steps:

- First, place your larger foot on a piece of paper and trace around it.
- Second, set your shoe directly over the tracing.
- Finally, make a tracing of the two. If the foot tracing is wider than the shoe, the shoe may be too narrow for your foot. Use the tracing to judge future shoe purchases and to assess the fit of your current shoe collection

Adapted from materials from the American Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society.