

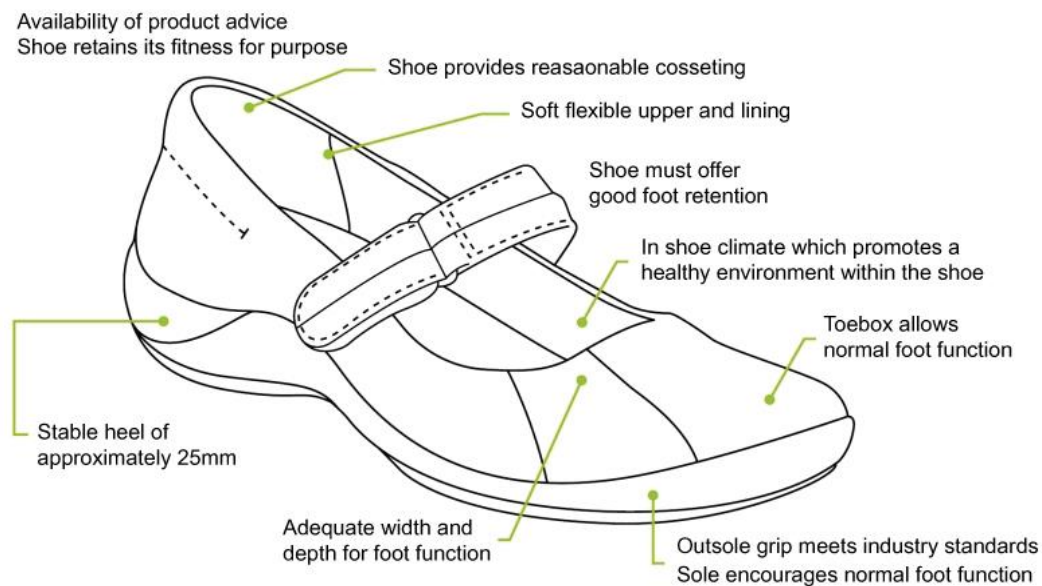
Shoes play an important role in reducing pain and falls prevention. Most shoe shops on the high street stock a range of styles that help to reduce the risk of painful foot and ankle conditions by reducing friction and pressure and maintaining good foot function. Suitable shoes should include the following:

- An adjustable fastening such as buckles, laces or Velcro for a firm fit at the heel. Avoid backless footwear.
- A heel height of no more than 3cm and avoid a narrow heel base. The heel counter should be firm and offer support to the heel.
- Enough length and width across the widest part of your foot to allow the toes to move. Leave 1 cm space from your longest toe on the bigger foot to the end of the shoe.
- Flexibility. Shoes should be able to bend as the foot bends so that the foot is able to move naturally and provide grip and shock absorbancy however not be over-flexible. If you have pain in your forefoot (balls of your feet and toes) a stiffer soled shoe would be more beneficial.
- The shape of the shoe should fit the natural shape of the foot, especially around the toes.
- When trying on new footwear always take your orthotics with you to ensure a good fit. If you are trying on shoes with removable insoles always remove them before inserting your orthotics and then walk around for a few minutes to ensure they do not pinch or rub.
- Try to avoid shoes with seams to reduce the risk of rubbing and blistering.

The uppers and linings of your shoes should be made from natural materials such as soft leather. This will reduce chances of rubbing and sweating.

If you prefer to buy shoes from your local store it is always a good idea to try them on at the end of the day, as most people find that their feet swell slightly after they have been on them for a period of time.

If there are shoe laces, tie them and walk around for a minute or two to ensure a correct fit and see if they pinch or rub.



Slippers

Many people wear slippers at home because they are easy to take on and off, and are soft and comfortable. Slippers however do not give much support to the foot and the soles (bottoms) may have little cushioning. They may also lead to trips and falls around the house. It is better to well-fitting shoes with a non-slip sole and velcro fasteners which are reserved for indoor use instead.

Summer Shoes/Sandals

Flat sandals and flip flops are fine for short trips such as walking on the beach, in the garden or around the house, but are not ideal for long walks or for wearing every day due to the lack of support provided. In fact wearing sandals and flip flops can cause hard skin, cracked heels, corns, skin and fungal infections and blisters.

The best summer sandal for frequent wear is one with straps that hold your foot in place across the top and at the back for example a gladiator sandal. You can buy sandals that have moulded soles and hug the arch of your feet, providing more support than those that have thin and flat soles.

Socks

Good socks will not only help keep your feet comfortable within your shoes but will also keep them dry by drawing moisture away from the feet.

If you have problems with circulation or swelling, avoid socks with tight elastic tops. There are wider, soft-top socks available.

Sports

Footwear should be given the same consideration as any other piece of sporting equipment. Sports shoes should protect as much as possible, be durable and should be right for the sport and surface.

Running shoes

Running shoes are designed for just that – running! They are very flexible, which enables the foot to bend and flex through each step. They should have adequate cushioning in the midsole and a flared heel for stability. Do not use for sports such as tennis, basketball or aerobics, which involve sideways stepping.

Cross trainers

These are much stiffer and provide greater support for the foot when side-to-side movements are made and can be used across a range of activities such as basketball, tennis or aerobics.

Useful Addresses

College of Podiatry
2nd Floor Quartz House 207 Providence Square, Mill St, London SE1 2EW
020 7234 8620
www.feetforlife.org

Health and Care Professions Council
Park House
184 Kennington Park Road
London SE11 4BU
Tel: 020 7582 0866
www.hcpc-uk.org
Falls Prevention website:
www.worcsfallsprevention.co.uk

For an in-depth guide to what types of shoes are suitable for dealing with and/or avoiding foot and ankle problems, please visit:
www.healthy-footwear-guide.com.

A lot of shoe shops have staff that are qualified to find the right fit for the customer. Find your nearest shoe fitting specialist by visiting www.shoefitters-uk.org.