



Royal Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Patient Information

Footwear Checklist

Welcome to the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital (ROH).
 For further information please visit www.roh.nhs.uk

Adequate footwear is important in reducing foot discomfort and maintaining good foot health. A poor pair of shoes can lead to foot pain, deformities and even falls in some patients. As we are all different, one size doesn't fit all when it comes to footwear. Indeed different types of feet may require slightly different shoes. However, the checklist below will help you on your quest to find a good pair of shoes.

Table 3. Footwear Suitability Scale (Nancarrow 1999)

1. Is the heel of your shoe less than 2.5cm (1")?	As the height of your heel increases, the pressure under the ball of your foot becomes greater. Increased pressure can lead to callus and ulceration
2. Does the shoe have laces, buckles or elastic to hold it onto your foot?	If you wear slip on shoes with no restraining mechanism, your toes must curl up to hold the shoes on. This can cause the tops of your toes to rub on your shoes leading to corns and calluses. Secondly, the muscles in your feet do not function as they should to help you walk. Instead they are being used less efficiently to hold your shoes on.
3. Do you have 1cm (approx thumb nail length) of space between your longest toe and the end of your shoe when standing?	This is the best guide for the length of the shoe, as different manufacturers create shoes that are different sizes. Your toes should not touch the end the shoe as this is likely to cause injury to the toes and place pressure on the toe nails.
4. Do your shoes have a well-padded sole?	Shoes should have supportive, but cushioned sole to absorb any shock and reduce pressure under the feet.
5. Are your shoes made from material that breathes?	A warm, moist environment can harbour organisms, such as those that cause fungal infections.
6. Do your shoes protect your feet from injury?	The main function of footwear is protection from the environment. Ensure your shoes are able to prevent entry of foreign objects that can injure the foot. If you have diabetes, a closed toe is essential to prevent injury to the foot.
7. Are your shoes the same shape as your feet?	Many shoes have pointed toes and cause friction over the tops of the toes which can lead to corns, callus and ulceration. If you can see the outline of your toes imprinted on your shoes, then the shoe is probably the wrong shape for your foot.
8. Is the heel counter of your shoe firm?	Hold the sides of the heel of your shoe between the thumb and forefinger and try to push them together. If the heel compresses, it is too soft to give your foot support. The heel counter provides much of the support of the shoe and must be firm to press

If you have not put a tick in every box, your footwear is probably not protecting and supporting your foot as it should.

Your foot health practitioner will be able to discuss footwear in more detail with you if required.

Reference

Nancarrow, S (1990) The Footwear Suitability Scale. Aus Journ Pod med.