

Frisco Footcare At Stonebriar Shoe Buying Tips

Foot care is usually the most overlooked part of our health and wellness. Proactive foot health can prevent major foot issues later in life. While many foot problems (ingrown toenails, heel pain, bunions, hammertoes, warts, trauma, flat feet, arthritis, and diabetic ulcerations) will require the consultation of a foot-specialist physician, (podiatric surgeon/podiatrist) most do not. Like any other matters of health, knowing how to care for your feet may prevent the need for medical treatments. The first, best way to protect your feet is by selecting and wearing proper-fitting shoes. The following are some tips for choosing the right pair of shoes.

First, never buy shoes when you are in a hurry. Always allow at least one hour for shopping and trying on shoes. If children are likely to become rowdy and disruptive, make arrangements to shoe shop for only one child at a time, so that full attention can be given to the fitting process. If for yourself, you may wish to leave them at home.

Second, pay no attention to the manufacturer's size/number on the shoe. Many people insist that their feet are a certain "size" and that "size" is what they will always wear. When at the store, always allow the salesman to measure your foot and bring the size shoe that is measured. Also, always try on both the right and left shoes. If that size feels good, automatically try on a half size larger. If that size feels good, increase another half size, and so on, until you reach a size that is too large - where your arch, heel, and bridge (top of arch) are no longer well supported. The size that is too large may be only the next size larger, but try it on anyway. The fact is, no two brands use the same sizing patterns, and the only way to know there wasn't a packaging error or construction flaw is to be measured and try on several different sizes. The length of the shoe should be such that there is no way that the foot can be manipulated to allow the toes to touch the inside of the shoe. If the toes are able to touch the inside, in any way, go to the next larger size. All of this applies to infant/toddler shoes, with the requirement that the sole of the shoe, toe to heel, can be easily bent or folded between your thumb and index finger. Young children need shoes with flexible soles. It is important to remember: very few problems can arise from shoes that are too large, while most problems occur in shoes that are too small.

Third, realize that men's and especially women's dress-type shoes are not at all good for your feet. Neither are any shoes which do not support the arch, cup the heel, and hold the shoe to the foot. This means that flip-flop type sandals, loafers, any high heels, pumps, slides, clogs, and mules are all poor choices, and are causing some damage to your or your family's feet. Worn for short periods, 3 or 4 hours, there is nothing wrong with these shoes. However, all day wear, day after day, will, for most people, lead to arthritic changes and/or other problems that will require a visit to the podiatrist, possibly for surgical correction.

Good shoe choices are athletic-type and dress-casual shoes. Many manufacturers are now making more stylish models which support the foot properly. Examples are: New Balance/Dunham/Aravon and Clark's, which has a whole new line of men's and women's shoes. Timberland, Mephisto, Munro, and Red Wing also consistently produce excellent footwear.

Finally, there is no such thing as a "sale" on shoes. A good rule of thumb for pricing is the following: any pair of shoes which costs less than \$60 are generally junk. They are either "seconds," having a construction flaw, or they have no flaw and are just plain junk. Shoes costing more than \$120 for athletic-type or \$200 for dress-casuals are, typically, falsely inflated and are a rip-off. With shoes, as with most things, you get what you pay for.

The bottom line is that the human foot is not biomechanically engineered to walk on flat surfaces (wood/concrete slab). We are made to walk on grass, dirt, sand, and gravel. Therefore, the goal of any shoe is to bring the ground up to the foot. Most people can achieve this with proper fitting shoes. For those who cannot, your neighborhood podiatrist will be able to provide other solutions or treatment options to remedy any problem.

*Dr. Christopher Dobry
Private Practice - Frisco, Texas
August 12, 2008*