

Where to find good footwear

Many shoe shops now stock extra width fitting footwear. There are also specialist suppliers of wider footwear which are good at accommodating bunions and hammer toes. Walking shoes are best all-rounder footwear incorporating good torsional and bending stiffness. Here are some example sources of wider fit and rocker styles:

- Alegria
- Amazon: typing "rocker sole shoes/sandals" into the search function
- Cheerful Soles: www.cheerfulsoles.co.uk
- Clarks: Wavewalk shoe or sandal (rocker sole) - www.clarks.co.uk
- CosyFeet: good for people with swollen feet and ankles - www.cosyfeet.com
- Earth Spirit
- FitFlops: rocker sandals and enclosed footwear - www.fitflops.co.uk
- Gabor Rolling Soft: rocker sole
- Hanwag: bunion walking shoes and boots - www.hanwag.com
- Heavenly Feet
- Hoka: rocker sole
- Joya: rocker sole
- Karrimor Caracal: trail running shoe with a rocker - www.karrimor.com
- Padders
- Quechua; sandals
- Reed Medical Ltd: rocker - www.brickweb.co.uk/foot-orthotics
- Salomon
- Saucony Endorphin Speed: rocker sole
- Vionic: (www.vionicshoes.co.uk)
- Walkmax Blackfit: available from online and high street stores (rocker sole)
- www.widerfitshoes.co.uk (measurement guides for increased forefoot width)

If you have any questions about the information in this leaflet, please contact Podiatry Services. Further information about the service and how to manage a range of foot health problems yourself, can also be found on our website: www.livewellsouthwest.co.uk/project/podiatry

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Podiatry Services Patient Information Leaflet



Good Footwear Advice

(January 2023 V1)

Wearing The Right Footwear

One general recommendation that will ease the discomfort of most common foot problems is proper fitting shoes. Poorly fitting shoes can make symptoms of foot pain worse and in many cases be the primary cause of the problem. It is important to purchase footwear that fits properly from the moment you buy them. Never buy footwear hoping they will “break in” later.

Getting The Correct Fit

- Trying on shoes later in the day is always best. This will ensure your footwear fits correctly even if your feet have become more swollen throughout the day
- Have both feet measured every year. Your left and right foot are most likely not the same size and may change in size from year to year. (your feet never stop changing)
- Always fit the larger foot. Adjustments can be made to your footwear to help fit the smaller foot
- Purchase footwear that matches the general shape of your foot (don't try to fit a square peg in a round hole)
- The footwear must allow adequate toe room while standing. There should be 3/8” to 1/2” of space between your longest toe and the end of the shoe (approximately a thumb's width)
- The widest part of your foot should sit in the widest part of the shoe
- Shoes should have a comfortable snug fit but should not feel tight or binding
- Your heels should fit comfortably in your shoes with minimal slippage
- Walk around in the shoe and be sure they feel comfortable. Make sure there are no pressure points from seams

Good Footwear Features

There are several factors that determine whether a shoe will offer good support:

Heel Counter - This is the hard piece in the back of the shoe that controls the foot's heel motion from side to side when you move. A

strong heel counter increases stability providing better support for the foot. To quickly test the effectiveness of the shoe's heel counter, place the shoe in the palm of your hand and put your thumb in the mid-portion of the heel counter and try to push the back of the shoe. If the heel counter does not bend very much it is strong.

Torsional Stability - This will test how easily the shoe twists. The torsional stability of the shoe prevents the foot from being twisted or turned when in motion, helping to reduce muscle fatigue from compensating for the instability. You can perform this test by holding the toe of the shoe in one hand and the heel in the other. Some foot and ankle problems may benefit from increased stiffness/flexibility, others from lower stiffness.

Bend Test - To test for this, hold the shoe in both hands at opposite ends, and try to bring your hands together. Some foot and ankle problems may benefit from increased stiffness/flexibility, others from lower stiffness.

Removable Liners - Shoes with removable liners are more versatile than those without them. Removable liners can be replaced by specialised foot orthotic without greatly altering the fit of the shoe.

Secure Fastening – It is best to choose a shoe with a form of adjustable fastening such as laces, Velcro straps or buckles. This will hold the foot into the shoe more efficiently. Slip on shoes can be very unsupportive and lead to foot issues.

Rocker Bottom Footwear

For some people we may recommend choosing a shoe that has a slightly stiffer (less flexible) rocker sole. This is where the underside of the sole is slightly more thickened under the midfoot and heel, and does not bend easily. These can be beneficial for offloading high forefoot pressures and reducing discomfort or pain at the forefoot and midfoot. Many shoes are available with this feature on the high street. And often good sports trainers, walking shoes and boots often have this design feature.