
FEET AND SHOES

Proper shoes can lead to pain-free mobility, can reduce the potential for some foot problems, can help the individual stay active and may reduce the risk of falls.

Here are some criteria when selecting the appropriate footwear:

- What is the condition of your current shoes? Check the wear pattern and slipperiness of the soles as well as the inside of the shoe for wear.
- Are you very active? Walking shoes or other leisure activity shoes may be more appropriate for regular activities.
- Can you afford to have more than one pair of shoes? If it is financially feasible, several pairs of shoes allow you to alternate among them. This helps to prevent callus formation that can lead to imbalance and falling.
- Do you wear open-back shoes or open-back house slippers? Such footwear can be hazardous and cause falls.
- What is the condition of your feet? Calluses or pressure areas can cause pressure or rubbing.
- Do your feet swell? Shop for all the shoes in the afternoon when swelling usually occurs. This can decrease the chance of buying shoes that become too tight with swelling.
- How do the feet feel inside the shoe? Numbness in feet and/or toes can indicate improperly fitting shoes.
- Is the shoe wide enough? Purchase shoes that are wide enough to accommodate the foot. A shoe that is too narrow can cause calluses or the toes to overlap. Proper fitting shoes minimize pressure or rubbing on the skin.
- Is the shoe long enough? If the toes butt up against the front of the shoe, it is too short. The shoe should be long enough to allow a finger width between the end of the great toe and the end of the shoe. When squeezing the shoe at the base of the toes, a slight give should occur prior to feeling the base of the toes.
- Is the shoe high enough? The depth of the shoe should be high enough to accommodate the front of the foot, without excessive pressure. Shoe should provide good ankle support.
- Do the shoes have sufficient padding? There should be sufficient padding inside the shoes. The soles, in particular, should be cushioned adequately to decrease heel pain.
- Are the soles excessively slick, slippery, or grippy? Soles that are excessively slick or slippery, or the opposite, too grippy can cause falls. A crepe sole is one recommendation because it also absorbs the shock.
- Are the heels too high or too low? In general, high heels should be avoided. One-half an inch is an ideal height for a heel. However, when an older adult wears high heels all of the time, the calf muscles become shortened.
- Look for a thin and flexible sole with good ankle support. No running shoes. Some suggested shoes are: 1.) Ecco 2.) Puma 3.) Rockport 4.) Easy Spirit 5.) Merrell