

Who's Shoes to Choose

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It is that time of year again. You are going out with your children to buy school shoes and you are wondering, "How do I choose the right shoes?" The following information will offer you some guidelines in buying shoes for your children and for you. There is no one brand that will accommodate everyone's foot shape, arch height, or special foot needs. Keep in mind that shoe styles change about every six months to one year, but these are basic guidelines when you go out to purchase shoes.

General Suggestions:

- Shoes are best purchased at the end of the day. Your feet may be slightly swollen, but this helps to ensure that your shoes are not too tight.
- You must have some "wobble room" in your shoes. If you can't wiggle your toes, your shoes are too tight. You will not "stretch them out" with wear. Go to the next ½ size of full size. Look for a round or square-toed shoe. These styles will allow room for conditions like hammer toes or bunions, which will be irritated by pointed-toe shoes or shoes that are too narrow.
- Measure both of your feet. Most people have one foot larger than the other. Fit your shoes to the larger foot.
- Try your shoes on with socks that are the thickness you wear every day. If you wear special inserts, like orthotics, take these with you and try them in the shoes. A shoe with a removable insole works best for people who wear these devices.
- Walk around in the store with the shoes on. If the shoes do not feel comfortable in the store, they will not feel comfortable at home. Try a different size or a different style. If you are unsure, purchase the shoes, take them home, and wear them around the house for a few days. If the shoes are not

worn, most quality shoe stores will let you exchange the shoes or return them for a refund.

- Your shoes should have good shock absorption, like athletic or walking shoes, in order to absorb the stress and strain you put on your feet. This is especially the case if you have any type of foot deformity or condition like heel pain.
- Shoes should have a good arch support. If the shoes are too flexible in the middle of the foot, you will be more prone to heel or arch pain.

Children's Shoe Considerations:

- Make sure there is at least a thumb's width between the end of the child's longest toe (this may be either the big toe or the second toe) and the end of the shoe.
- Shoes should fit snugly, but comfortably around the heel to prevent slippage. The heel counter should be more firm if your child is prone to heel pain, which occurs most often during sporting activities.
- Watch your children's feet for blisters or other forms of irritation. Check the shoe fit regularly to ensure that the child has not outgrown the shoes.
- Look for any limping or listen for complaints of pain, especially in younger children, as this may indicate that the shoe is too small, and the child cannot verbalize this to you.
- Finally, for everyone, wear the right shoe for the right activity. Running shoes for walking or running, walking shoes for walking, tennis shoes for tennis or basketball shoes for basketball. It may sound simple, but the wrong style shoe for a given activity is likely to lead to an injury.

Shoe technology has come a long way in the

last several decades. It may cost a little more

to have several shoe styles, but it costs a lot less than the pain and inconvenience of an injury.

You don't have to have as many shoes as Imelda Marcos, but it is much more comfortable to have the correct fit and style for your foot, no matter which activity you are wearing them for. If you have questions about shoe style or fit, consult your podiatrist for his or her expertise.

Happy shopping!