

Properly Fitting Comfortable Shoes

"The patient is the best judge of what constitutes a comfortable shoe."

The following are shoe characteristics that typically make a shoe comfortable to wear:

1. A Well-Fitted Shoe

Shoe not only need to be the correct length to fit our foot, but they also must be the correct width. Shoe manufacturers and shoe styles often vary the width significantly. Make sure that you wear shoes that not only fit the length of your foot, but also the width. Also, make sure the shoes have a comfortable fit at the heel and the toes.

2. Stiff Sole

A stiff sole minimizes excessive loading through the forefoot or midfoot. The opposite of this would be a highly flexible sole (ex. a slipper) which tends to concentrate the pressure in certain areas of the foot.

3. Rocker Bottom Contour

A smooth, slightly rounded contour to the sole of the shoe will help to even out force through the foot as it moves from heel strike to toe off.

4. Wide Toebox

In general, the front of the shoe should have enough space to accommodate the front of the foot without requiring it to be squished.

5. Soft, Comfortable Uppers

The material making up the upper part of the shoe, particularly that covering the toes, and midfoot should be soft and somewhat flexible enough to stretch (ex. soft leather).

6. Soft, Comfortable Insert

The bed that the foot rests on should be soft and accommodate to the foot. It may be necessary to buy a comfortable "over-the-counter" orthotic to replace the existing shoe insert.



Figure 1: Stiff Sole
(cannot be bent easily)



Figure 2: Flexible Sole
(too easily bent)



Figure 3: Rocker Bottom
(slightly rounded contour of the sole)