

Footwear at work

If you work in a field that increases the chance of injuring your feet, safety shoes are vital. Safety shoes and boots protect your feet, help prevent injuries and reduce the severity of injuries that occur in the workplace.

About podiatrists

Podiatrists are highly skilled health professionals trained to deal with the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of medical and surgical conditions of the feet and lower limbs. Podiatrists have completed a Bachelor of Podiatry or a higher degree. They are continually upgrading their skills and knowledge through further education and training.

Where can I find a podiatrist?

Contact the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) or the Podiatry Board of Australia (PBA) on 1300 419 495 or visit www.ahpra.gov.au

Many health funds in Australia provide for podiatry services on their ancillary tables. Government-funded services are available through the Department of Veteran Affairs, some public hospitals and community health centres.

Contact us

Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital

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Hospital Avenue
Nedlands WA 6009

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- Hospital Ave, Nedlands WA 6009
- General enquiries (08) 6457 3333
- Hearing impaired (TTY) (08) 6457 3900
- scgh.health.wa.gov.au

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request.

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Government of Western Australia
North Metropolitan Health Service
Sir Charles Gairdner Osborne Park Health Care Group



Choosing the right footwear

Patient information

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Caring for your feet

Feet bear an enormous burden each day. In addition to carrying our body weight, they must also twist and flex with increased impact and strain when we move around.

Feet can be injured if not properly supported, even through simple day-to-day activities.

Shoes play a vital role in providing support, as well as protecting our feet from external dangers.

The ideal shoe

There is no such thing as one perfect shoe. Feet come in many shapes and sizes and are involved in many activities. Generally, however, when you buy new shoes, it is important to make sure they:

- Fit properly
- Are supportive for the kind of activity you engage in
- Do not cause damage to your feet, or hurt in any way.

Choosing a good fit matters

You may need to look at different styles of shoe to find one that suits your foot shape.

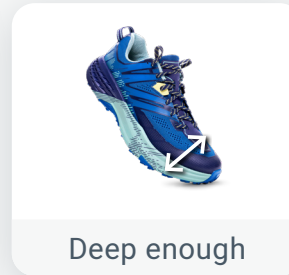
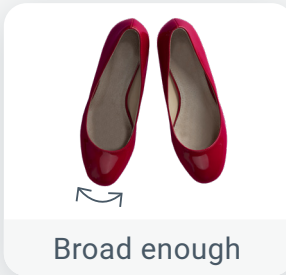
Both feet are rarely the same size, so it's important to fit your shoes to your larger foot. An experienced footwear salesperson can help you with this.

Since most shoe manufacturers have their own size range, you should decide based on what feels right.

People who have foot deformity from an injury or medical condition, such as arthritis or diabetes, may require shoes with extra depth or width.

Some people may require orthoses (inserts). Occasionally, a custom-made shoe will be most suitable. These should be prescribed by a podiatrist.

Shoe buying tips



When buying new shoes, keep in mind:

- **Materials:** Leather is best for shoe uppers. Synthetic or rubber are best for the soles, as they are generally more durable, shock absorbent and provide better grip.
- **Fixation:** Shoes should be secured on the feet with laces, straps or buckles, especially walking shoes. If your feet have to work to hold your shoes in place, your foot muscles may be strained.
- **Shape:** Pointy shoes can make your toes clench or claw. This may affect overall body posture. Clenched toes can cause rubbing. Broad-toed shoes allow the toes more room and can help prevent pressure injuries.

Also check that:

- The heel of your shoe is less than 2.5cm – high heels increase pressure on the ball of the foot.
- Your shoes have a well-padded sole – a cushioned sole absorbs shock and reduces pressure to the feet.
- Your shoes are made from a material that breathes – fungal infections such as tinea love a warm, moist environment. Absorbent socks can help draw moisture away.
- Your shoes protect you from injury. Your feet must be protected from your immediate environment.
- People with reduced sensation or circulation problems need to be especially careful that they do not injure their feet.

Other tips

- Your toes should not touch the end of your shoes or you may damage your nails and toes. You need a gap of about 1cm from the end of your largest toe to the shoe.
- Shoes should also be broad enough and deep enough to feel comfortable.
- Don't buy shoes that need breaking in. Shoes should be comfortable immediately.
- Shop for shoes later in the day. Most feet tend to swell during the day and it is best to fit shoes when your feet are at their largest.