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Get Expert Shoe Advice

It's important for people with diabetes to wear comfortable, supportive, and protective shoes.

More than 60% of nontraumatic lower-limb losses occur among people with diabetes, and many of these losses can be avoided through good foot care and the right shoe choice.¹

Introducing the Shoe Rack, a place where experts in the field of diabetes share their shoe recommendations. You can even try on six different pairs of shoes to see if they're right for you!

But first, in addition to choosing the right shoe, care for your feet properly by following these steps:

- **Check feet daily.**
- **Keep feet cool and dry.**
- **Always take time to try on shoes before you buy them.**
- **Shoes should fit when you try them on — no breaking them in.**
- **Treat a new skin irritation, blister, or wound immediately.**
- **Replace athletic shoes every six months or 400 to 600 miles.**

Experts Share Their Must-Haves

Experts in the field of diabetes recommend two types of shoes: **running shoes and leather lace-ups.**

Running shoes provide the comfort, support, reduced shock, and limited motion that are ideal if you have diabetes. These shoes help your feet breathe, protect your feet from the risk of infection, and are soft inside, which prevents the friction that can cause ulcers.



Leather lace-up shoes are the next best thing to running shoes for people with diabetes. The laces allow you to adjust for foot swelling, while still limiting the motion of your joints. Such flexibility can reduce overall swelling and pain.

Sometimes it's not possible to wear running shoes or leather lace-ups. Meetings at the office and special occasions may require a little more style. Read on to learn about the features you should look for in every kind of shoe.

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Fashion and Function

Learn how to see beyond the style to find a good shoe.

A well-accessorized foot goes beyond the latest styles. For people with diabetes, great shoes combine fashion with a lot of function. Choose a shoe with a timeless combination of these practical features:



1. Breathable Fabric. Leather and permeable fabrics allow your feet to breathe and release moisture. Trapped moisture can cause infections such as foot fungus and athlete's foot, and if you have high glucose levels, the extra glucose can feed the infection and make it worse.²



2. A Low Heel. Low heels decrease pressure on your feet and keep your toes from cramping.³ A good rule of thumb is that heel height should be no more than 1-1/2 inches.⁴



3. Laces. Instead of tying you up, laces set your feet free! You're able to adjust your shoe width throughout the day in case your feet swell.^{5,3}



4. A Deep Toe Box. Give your toes some room! Some extra space — 3/8 inch to 1/2 inch — reduces pressure that can lead to skin breakdown and ulcers.⁵



5. A Flexible, Cushioned Sole. You're walking on air with a cushioned shoe. It feels good, plus you avoid the downward pressure that can lead to swelling.⁵



6. Smooth Seams. Shoes with seams or rough spots can create blisters, and worse, ulcers.⁵ So look for shoes that are nice and smooth inside.



7. Width. For a pair you'll want to wear all of the time, go wide. The widest part of your shoe should be roughly the same size as the widest part of your foot.^{5,3}

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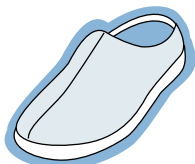
Try These On for Size

**Ever buy a pair of shoes because they looked good on display?
And now they're still on display — in your closet?**

It's hard to resist some shoes, but before you make the mistake of buying them just for looks, see if these shoes fit.



1. High Heels. High heels and cowboy boots increase pressure on the foot and cramp the toes.³ When there's too much pressure on the foot, skin breakdown can occur and lead to ulcers.⁵ Ouch! Limit the use of high heels for special occasions.



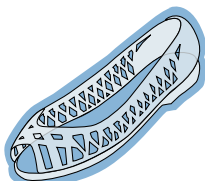
2. Slip-ons. Slip-ons are not ideal for people with diabetes because they're made narrow to prevent slippage.³ That can mean a tight squeeze! Loose-fitting slip-ons may allow for too much joint movement, which also can lead to foot pain.⁵ Limit the use of slip-ons for special occasions.



3. Shoes With Pointed Toes. They may look fun, but shoes with pointed toes are more about pain than pleasure. Be kind to your toes and give them some wiggle room.



4. Unnaturally Shaped Shoes. Leave these to the elves. Narrow, tiny, or unnaturally shaped shoes can lead to swelling and pain.⁵



5. Vinyl or Plastic Shoes. Hard and non-breathable synthetic materials can lead to foot fungus, skin breakdown, and ulcers.^{3,5} Occasionally, shoes made of synthetic material feature other benefits such as a breathable design, low heel, generous width, and roomy toe box. Shoes with these characteristics, such as CrocsRx™ shoes, are fine choices for people with diabetes.*



6. Flip-flops and Sandals. Exposing your feet means increasing the risk for injury and infection, which can be hard to heal. If you have neuropathy and can't feel your feet, these shoes are risky.⁶ Limit the use of these shoes for special occasions.



shoe rack

find the right shoe for you!

Sources Consulted:

- ¹ National Institutes of Health. National Diabetes Statistics.
- ² National Institutes of Health. Prevent Diabetes Problems: Keep Your Feet and Skin Healthy.
- ³ American Diabetes Association®. How to Shop for Shoes.
- ⁴ The Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists. Choosing Shoes.
- ⁵ AARP. Walking Shoes for Diabetics.
- ⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Take Charge of Your Diabetes.