

## Exercise: Finding the Right Shoes



### Why are the right shoes important?

Keeping your feet healthy and comfortable is important. Having the right shoes can make a big difference.

Be sure to get shoes that are made for your activities, especially when doing aerobic activities. Shoes designed for running, walking, hiking, or certain sports have features that will keep your feet comfortable and supported during that activity. Replace your shoes often if you exercise regularly.

### How can you find the right shoes?

Shoes that fit properly are key to preventing foot problems. The following tips may help you prevent toe, foot, or ankle problems or injuries.

#### What to look for

- Choose a shoe that conforms as nearly as possible to the shape of your forefoot. This is the front, widest part of your foot.
- Look for roomy footwear that has a wide toe box with enough room for your toes and the ball of your foot. You should be able to wiggle your toes in your shoes.

- Look for shoes made of materials that "give" or stretch. They will be the most comfortable for your toes and feet.
- Look for shoes that do not have seams. This will prevent rubbing or irritation.
- Look for shoes that breathe when your feet sweat.

#### Tips for trying on shoes

- Make sure your heel fits comfortably in the shoe with a minimum amount of slipping.
- Stand during the fitting process, since your foot gets longer when you stand. There should be one finger's width (about 0.5 inches) between your longest toe and the end of the shoe.
- Wear the type of socks that you will most often wear with the shoes to be sure they fit.
- Walk around to make sure that the shoe fit feels right.
- If a particular shoe fits snugly, you may be able to have it stretched for a better fit.

#### Other ideas

- Plan to try on shoes at the end of the day when your feet are most swollen. Foot size may vary half a size from the morning to the evening or after a day at work.
- Have your feet measured regularly. The size of your feet may change as you grow older.
- Have both feet measured. Often one foot is larger than the other. Shoes should be fitted to the larger foot.
- Don't choose shoes based on the size marked inside. Sizes vary among shoe brands and styles. Pick shoes by how they fit your feet.

## What should you avoid?

Consider these tips when buying everyday shoes:

- Avoid high-heeled, narrow, and pointed-toe shoes if you can. High-heeled shoes increase pressure on the front of the foot.
- If you cannot avoid wearing high-heeled shoes, look for a pair that gives your toes more room.

- Choose shoes with heels that are no more than 2 inches high.
- Alternate these shoes with flat, roomy shoes to give your toes a chance to move freely.

### Breaking shoes in

You should not have to "break in" shoes if they fit properly.