

Footwear Information Leaflet

Introduction

This leaflet provides practical advice on choosing suitable footwear to support your musculoskeletal (MSK) health. MSK conditions can cause pain or discomfort in the joints, muscles, tendons, ligaments, and other supporting structures of the body.

Wearing appropriate footwear can help reduce strain, improve your comfort.

[Watch a video with footwear advice.](#)



Footwear
Information Video

What to consider when buying footwear

When selecting new footwear, it's important to think about both **fit** and **function**:

1. **Fit** – how well the shoe supports and holds your foot comfortably.
2. **Function** – how the shoe's design affects how your foot moves and performs during walking.

Features of a good shoe

- The shoe should be the **correct length, width, and depth** for your foot.
- Leave around **1 cm** of space between your longest toe and the end of the shoe.
- The **upper** should be **soft**, without hard seams or ridges, and made from **natural or breathable materials** such as leather or ventilated synthetic fabric.
- Shoes should have a **secure, adjustable fastening** such as **laces, Velcro straps**, or **buckles** to hold the foot firmly in place.
- The **toe box** should be **round and deep**, giving your toes room to move freely.
- The **heel** should be **less than 4 cm high, broad**, and **stable** to reduce strain on the foot.
- The **back of the shoe** (heel counter) should be **firm** and fit snugly around the heel for stability.
- A **thick, lightweight sole** made from **non-slip material** provides good cushioning and grip.



Footwear to avoid

Some styles can cause discomfort or worsen MSK problems. Try to avoid:

- **Slip-on or court shoes** – these rely on your toes to grip the shoe, which can cause strain or lead to corns and calluses.
- **Pointed toes** – they can crowd the toes and alter the natural shape of the foot.
- **High heels** (over 4 cm) – push the foot forward, placing excess pressure on the toes.
- **Thin or very hard soles** – reduce cushioning and shock absorption.
- **Overly soft, flexible shoes** – provide little support and can increase instability.

Good footwear examples

Wider fitting shoes	Supportive trainer brands
Wider fit shoes	Asics
Cozey feet	Brookes
New balance	Saucony
www.widefitshoes.co.uk	Hoka
Fitville	Mizuno
Altra	New balance
Hotter	Scarpa
M and S Wide fit range	Nike
Nike wide fit range	Adidas

Contact information

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