

Shoes are the culprit for aching feet and bad back

"My feet are killing me." How many times have you heard or said that? Probably hundreds, but chances are it's not your feet that are causing the problem - it's your shoes.

And every year, women across Canada continue to sacrifice their health and well-being all in the name of fashion.

Many women have the desire to look taller, younger, and thinner. But for some it can be a tall order to obtain what nature failed to provide.

The answer - high heels. They can make you look younger by giving the instant illusion of height and slenderness.

High heels tilt the hips forward and place the foot in a more vertical position making it look smaller.

The down side is the same mechanism which adds length to your legs and spice to your walk, also adds some less than desirable qualities to your feet, not to mention what it can do to your back.

There's nothing appealing about pump bumps, corns and ingrown toenails. The overwhelming majority of foot problems and deformities are caused by extended wear of high heeled shoes.

Maybe pointy toes and sky-high heels were the definition for style once, but now women also want, and need, comfort and fit. So how do you find that happy medium?

One of the best places to start is by buying shoes what are the right size.

Most women's shoes do not fit properly. Research shows, despite the fact that the average woman's foot size is 8-wide, the best-selling shoe size is 7 1/2 medium.

According to Dr. Scott Kanro, a podiatrist and leading researcher, we can expect our feet to change as we age. Fluctuations in weight or activities may result in a different shoe size and the protective pads on the feet also become thinner.

After a hard day's work or standing for long periods of time, feet tend to

swell and fit becomes an even more important issue. "Improperly fitted footwear and general overall shoe design can lead to gait problems by compressing the toes."

"It can also cause corns, calluses and a painful condition called Morton's neuroma, which is a growth that forms on the nerve located between the toes," said Kanro.

No wonder our feet are killing us. However, luckily as we grow older we seem to become wiser. Studies show more than

half of all women over the age of 40 years, choose comfort and fit as their main concern when buying shoes.

Where comfort was once strictly grandma's domain, new styles and advanced construction means you don't have to stick to sensible shoes to make it through your day.

Dr. Kanro recommended women look for shoes that are shaped on forms which are asymmetrical because so are one's feet.

Footwear that has comfortable padded linings, arch supports and soft lightweight leather result in shoes that are made for a

full day's wear. So for anyone who still thinks that comfort means dressing down and not up, think back honestly to the last time you lurched or worse, winced, around the office or out for the evening in tight, awkward, uncomfortable shoes. Not exactly an inspired image, is it? But then again, neither are foot powder, Epsom salts and band-aids. Who is the real culprit? Here's a hint: stop blaming your feet and take a hard look at your

shoes. Think about it. It could be the start of something beautiful.

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* Questions from bereavement classes are answered here by the editor of AfterLoss, the monthly grief-recovery help letter. For your free copy of AfterLoss or one of our other helpful booklets dealing with grief recovery just call or stop by.

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