

# Now Women Cut Off Toes to Force On "Toothpick" Shoes

Two Women in England

Have Undergone Amputation of Their Small Toes and Surgeons Make the Report that They Walk "Better than Ever"



First Diagram, at Left, Shows Natural Bone Structure of Woman's Bare Foot When Walking; Note How Different Its Outline Is from that of "Toothpick" Shoe. Second Diagram Shows All of This Foot Except the Little Toe Compressed in Shoe; If the Little Toe Were Also Forced Into the Shoe, It Would Have to Be Painfully Crowded and "Lapped" or Turned Under.

Third Diagram Shows Foot Comfortably Encased in "Toothpick" Shoe After Amputation of Little Toe.

FASHIONABLE women are cutting off their toes in order to wear narrower shoes!

Already two operations have taken place in exclusive London private sanitariums, and the fad is spreading.

Only the little toe of each foot is sacrificed on the altar of vanity, for the purpose of the toe operation is not to shorten the foot, but merely to enable it to fit comfortably into the extremely long and narrow "toothpick" shoe which originated in America and has now become swaggar in the British Isles.

Two young women, both beautiful, both social leaders, had their little toes removed in the same private hospital at Mayfair. The operation, performed with a local anesthetic, is said to be painless and to leave a scar so slight as to be scarcely noticeable.

The convalescents, when they have their bandages removed, believe that they will never again suffer from the disability of Cinderella's ugly sisters. They send for the narrowest pair of shoes to be found in the smart shoe shops, and discover to their intense delight that they can accommodate four toes in a shoe which would have been much too narrow for a complete set.

The women who have had their little toes removed declare that the operation, in addition to bringing them into line with the prevailing fashion, enables them to walk with ease and comfort unknown to them for years. The little toe of the woman who has been addicted to too narrow shoes before the operation is usually found to be curled under, compressing and getting in the way of the other toes and frequently calloused and pressed out of shape.

Surgeons are divided as to whether the artificial transformation of miliary from a ten-toed creature into an eight-toed one will have any permanent harmful effect. Apparently, and by their own statements, women who have undergone the operation

walk, stand, dance and run with as much ease afterward as before—even with, more ease if the foot has been previously cramped. A number of the leading surgeons of England agree with them that the fad is harmless. Others take a different view, strongly advise against it, and declare that can be possible only when the foot is equipped with nature's full set of toes.

Certain it is that women golf players, athletes, professional dancers and those who for sport or business have to spend



The Tiny "Golden Lily" Foot of a Chinese Lady, Deformed by Binding in Childhood and Keeping the Foot Compressed in Bandages Until She is a Grown Woman.



Remarkable X-Ray Photo of Woman's Foot Taken While Wearing a "Toothpick" Shoe. Note How the Toe Bones Are Compressed.

long hours on their feet, will not embrace this new vagary of fashion.

Although the fad may be followed by individuals here and there in America, there is little likelihood that it will be widely adopted "on this side of the pond."

American women as a class have been blessed by nature with smaller and narrower feet than most of their European sisters. This fact has been remarked on by scientists, style experts and counsellors of feminine beauty. They differ as to the reasons, but they agree on the fact.

This is true even of the slender blond beauties of the British aristocracy. The most plausible reason, given by the British themselves, is that a large part of the British upper class is a country aristoc-

racy—a race whose men and women for many generations have engaged in outdoor sports and physical exercise to an extent unparalleled until very recently in any other country. Consequently, the long, narrow type of shoe, sensible enough for the American foot and unquestionably possessing great beauty of line when worn with certain types of co-

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Photo of Katharine Brown, New York Women's Swimming Club, Showing the Natural Spread of the Foot When the Weight of the Body is Upon It.



A Chinese Lady with Her Young Son, Showing Her Tiny Bound Feet in Comparison with the Normal Feet of the Child.



This Type of "Toothpick" Shoe is Now the Rage in London.

tumes, presented difficulties for English wear.

English women liked the shoe. They had no criticism, to make of it. They didn't want to change it. They changed their feet instead.

The only formal and official English pronouncement from medical circles on the toe-cutting fad comes from the National Orthopedic Hospital:

"Toe cutting is not dangerous if done by a competent surgeon. Sometimes it is even necessary when the toe is afflicted by disease or has been severely injured by too tight shoes. In our opinion, however, it is not justifiable to have the little toe cut off merely to follow fashion."

Whether it is "justifiable" or not, women are actually doing it—just as in all ages and all countries, civilized and uncivilized, women have voluntarily undergone fantastic tortures, mutilations and distortions to make themselves more attractive to their suitors or more pleasing to their own eyes.

Compared with what the upper-class women of China have done to their feet for more than three thousand years, the fad of the ultra-modern English woman in cutting off her little toes is as mild an operation as visiting the manicure.

The practice of foot-binding is widely discouraged now in the Chinese republic by the majority of its most beautiful and aristocratic women. Less than 100 years ago it was almost universal. To-day it is still practiced.

After a Chinese girl baby is born into an aristocratic home, if the parents are still advocates of the old standards of female beauty, she is taken when scarcely able to toddle to an expert foot-binder. At this age the tendons and muscles are still soft and the bones are not yet firmly set. Her little toes are bent backward under the instep and each foot is tightly swathed in tape bandages. From that moment on, bandages are never removed, except to be immediately replaced by equally tight or tighter ones. The feet are completely stopped and growth is almost completely stopped. The result is the tiny "golden lilies"—the little deformed feet less than three inches long, which mandarins for ages have regarded as an exquisite and dainty mark of feminine loveliness. An additional result is that the Chinese "beauty," by Western standards of activity, is a cripple all her life.

Extremely high heels are another instance of distortion of natural lines in civilized countries for the sake of style or beauty.

Advocates of the toe-cutting fad in England declare that because of the shape of modern shoes for women the little toe is of scarcely any use, and that it would naturally disappear or become atrophied in the course of time by natural evolution, even if it were not amputated.

"The little toe is degenerating, owing to tight-fitting shoes," says one authority, "and babies born hundreds of years hence will not have any little toes at all. What difference can it make, then, if some of our women now, for the sake of style and comfort, hasten nature's process by calling in the aid of the surgeon's knife?"

So, apparently, if you happen to fall in love with an English beauty who has particularly narrow and stylish feet, you needn't be surprised, when you take her for a day at the seashore, to find that you have fallen in love with an eight-toed Venus.

Another Method of Distorting the Feminine Foot for the Sake of Style: Heels Seven Inches High Which Were Actually Worn by an Actress on the Stage.