



## Foot Health Fact Sheet

# FOOTWEAR HEALTH CHECK

### Did you know...

Your feet house a quarter of the bones in your entire body? This is why it is so important to ensure your shoes fit properly!

Ready to buy some new shoes? Carry out these five steps first, to ensure your feet stay healthy and well-protected.

#### Step 1: Push

Want to see how much support your shoes provide? Push the back ends of your shoes inwards. If the back end stays firm, the heel counter is robust and will provide significant support to your feet. If the back end bends inwards, the heel counter is flexible. This means you either have a light-weight training shoe meant for activities that don't require support, or you may need to re-think your footwear purchase!

#### Step 2: Bend

Want to check your shoe is flexible where it counts? Bend it where your toes will go. Your foot naturally bends and flexes at your metatarsal joints, located just behind your toes. Having a shoe that bends with your feet is important not only for comfort, but also for facilitating training routines. The more flexible and elastic your shoe is where the metatarsal joints bend, the greater your ability to activate and act on the muscles in your foot.

#### Step 3: Twist

Want to make sure your foot is supported during physical activities? Ensure the middle section of your shoe can't twist.

You should not be able to twist your shoes through the middle, instead it should remain stable and firm. This is essential for supporting your foot arch, and when bearing the weight of your body.

#### Step 4: Tie

Want to make sure your feet are firmly secured in your shoes? Tying laces can help! If you don't want to use laces, then buckles or velcro can achieve the same result. By securing your feet, it helps to keep your toes from jamming into the front end of your shoes – and it increases support, which can help relieve pain in your feet.

#### Step 5: The rule of thumb

Want to ensure your shoes fit correctly? Look no further than your thumb!

You should leave about one thumb-width (1.5cm) of space between the tip of your longest toe and the front end of the shoe you are fitting for. This is because as you move, your foot slides forward. If your toes are touching the front end of your shoes, then they are too small! Remember – your longest toe may not necessarily be your big toe!



Find a podiatrist at [foothealthaustralia.org.au](http://foothealthaustralia.org.au)

This fact sheet is available as a download from [foothealthaustralia.org.au](http://foothealthaustralia.org.au)



# DO YOU NEED TO SEE A PODIATRIST?



## DOES THE FOLLOWING APPLY TO YOU OR YOUR FAMILY?

- Can you only walk for a short period before your feet or legs hurt?
- Do you experience pain in your lower limbs at night?
- Do you experience tingling in your feet?
- Have you noticed your legs or feet are swollen?
- Do you have cuts or fissures on your feet that take a long time to heal?
- Are you returning to sport after an injury?
- Are you uncertain about which running or sports shoe to buy?
- Do you find that you wear out the outside of your shoes quickly?
- Have you noticed your toes poke holes in the top of your shoes?
- Does your forefoot become hot and painful after running or walking?
- Do your hips hurt?
- Has pain in your feet or legs stopped you from exercising?
- Are you worried about your child's feet?
- Do you have arthritis in your feet?
- Do you experience reoccurring gouty attacks?
- Are you worried about the thickness of your nails?
- Do you have discoloured toe nails?
- Are you worried about your foot odour?
- Do your toe nails cause you pain?
- Have you noticed your toes are clawed?
- Do you have hard skin on your feet? Is it getting worse?
- Do you find it hard to cut your own nails?
- Do you find it hard to fit your feet into shoes because of your bunion?

**Ticked one or more boxes? Then you need to see a podiatrist.**

## GO SEE A PODIATRIST BECAUSE...

Podiatrists are Foot Health Experts and understand the structure and movement of your feet and lower limbs.

They can assess, diagnose and treat foot, ankle, knee, leg or hip pain.

Given your feet alone house a quarter of the bones in your entire body, a podiatrist is best placed to get you moving, active or pain-free.

## FIND A PODIATRIST NEAR YOU

Head to [foothealthaustralia.org.au](http://foothealthaustralia.org.au) and search by postcode or suburb to find a podiatrist close to you.



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