

Keep Fit

If you like to exercise why not give your feet a 'work out'? You won't get out of breath if you try these exercises, and we can't guarantee how many calories you'll burn, but you will certainly give your circulation a healthy boost.

Lose your Marbles... Pick up the marbles with your toes one by one and pop them into a container – not as easy as it sounds! Different sized bottle necks or jars, makes it a skilful game.

Move over Monet!... Choose a subject i.e. animal, fruit etc. and holding a pen or chalk between your toes, see what masterpiece you can create. For younger children, take them outside with a bowl of water-based paint and an old roll of wallpaper and watch them make footprints and patterns with pieces of sponge.

Toe the Line... Children love to balance and will often copy circus performers walking the tightrope. Roll out a line of ribbon or string and ask them to tiptoe to the end...and then tiptoe backwards...if you fall off you have to start again. If you think that's easy – you try it!

Picnic blanket... Lay a towel under your feet (sitting or laying) then gradually 'claw' it into a scrunched up heap. Find the corners with your toes and smooth it back out again.

Bath Time... Whilst sitting in the bath, pick up your sponge, flannel or anything else off the bottom.

The following exercises are ideal whether in the office, watching TV or if travelling long distance in cramped conditions, to help avoid DVT (deep vein thrombosis)...

Around the Clock... Sitting or laying comfortably follow a circular motion with your foot – not your leg, clockwise then anti-clockwise. This will strengthen your ankle muscles.

Wiggle... Regularly wiggle and separate your toes one by one. Whatever time of day, wherever you are and whatever your footwear, you should always be able to wiggle your toes...hmmm enjoy!

TRAINERS AND PLIMSOLLS

A Guide to...

A Guide to Trainers & Plimsolls

Produced by The Society of Shoe Fitters

For more information contact The Secretary

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Please note that the following has been written in response to some misinformed schools insisting that plimsolls are worn all day – often to protect their carpeting, and without regard to their student’s feet and foot health.

There is nothing wrong with plimsolls or trainers being worn in the right conditions and for the right purpose.

You should always “wear the right shoes for the right occasion” and then whatever the type of footwear, they will perform correctly and in accordance with their design and manufacture.

Manufacturers of exercise footwear i.e. trainers, create them to be used in specific conditions for specific sports, and a tremendous amount of research goes into their design. However, because of sportswear becoming an integral part of “street fashion” and also that they appear to fit and feel comfortable instantly (due to the amount of padding inside them), their popularity has soared. It has been easy for “cheaply made / unbranded” trainers to fill any retail outlet that chooses to sell them, their accessibility increasing their popularity. The truth is that worn all day every day, they can be harmful to your feet and general health. Feet may widen and become flaccid, and should you wish to go back to wearing structured footwear, you may suffer for a while!

HOW MANY TEACHERS WOULD WANT TO WEAR PLIMSOLLS ALL DAY OR KEEP CHANGING THEIR FOOTWEAR?

Children’s health is more important than floors!

Well fitting shoes for all day please, and plimsolls, trainers and wellies for sport /occasional wear.

Here are the facts...

- 1) Plimsolls are only available in a single (average) fitting and in most cases, whole sizes only.
- 2) Surveys indicate that only 28% of children have “average” fitting feet. Seven children in ten will therefore be forced to wear plimsolls that are too narrow, too wide, too short or too long. Not detrimental for short periods like a P.E. lesson or exercising, but extremely unwise for longer periods.
- 3) The soles of plimsolls are not as strong as that of normal shoes. Sharp objects can potentially penetrate the sole, puncturing the foot which could lead to a serious infection.
- 4) Most basic plimsolls have elasticised gussets, rather than laces, to make it easier for the child or teacher to take them off or put them on. The lack of an adjustable fastening reduces the effective fit of the plimsolls. This often means that the plimsolls are purchased too tight or too large. Too large means the child will curl their toes (claw toes) to keep them on. Too tight means toes will be squashed together which will not only affect development of the foot but can lead to circulatory problems.
- 5) Plimsolls are rarely designed to include, nor will the style normally allow for “growing room”, usually built into children’s shoes.
- 6) By school age a child’s foot contains 45 separate bone centres. These bones fuse together continuously until at least the mid teens forming the 26 bones in a normal adult foot. The bones have not fully ossified (become completely hardened) until around the age of eighteen.
- 7) Feet contain approx. 250,000 sweat glands - more per square centimetre than any other part of our body, and they release an eggcup full of perspiration each day, therefore the effects of wearing a plimsoll or training shoe for prolonged periods are:-
 - a) Bacteriological breakdown of perspiration trapped in the thick padded lining of trainers, increasing foot and shoe odour.
 - b) Hot wet feet - increasing the risk of skin disorders and creating ideal conditions for fungal infections to develop i.e. Athlete’s foot. (Remember mushrooms are a fungi, and they grow in dark, warm damp conditions!)
- 8) Do up your trainer laces!!!! The fashion not to tie laces and merely tuck them behind the tongue has caused many serious accidents through tripping or getting them caught up. It is not cool to miss football practise with a broken arm or leg!!! Why slow yourself down?

Keeping Feet Fit and Healthy ...

- Whatever your age, keep your feet clean and dry! Always dry thoroughly between your toes to avoid fungal infections and irritation.
- Cut toe nails straight across - they can become ingrown if shaped like fingernails (the shape should resemble a TV screen). Don't allow toe nails to grow too long as they will damage hosiery and rub on your shoe uppers.

Exercise....

Reflexologists believe that our feet map the up's and down's of our lives and general well being. At differing times in our life, our feet and ankles suffer from aches and pains, and you may be advised to do some foot exercises to strengthen and relax your muscles. For children, you need to make this fun, so we have put together some enjoyable exercises that will benefit both you and your family. Whether you need to correct a problem or help yourself relax...why not give them a go?

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SHOE BUYING AND FOOT CARE

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A guide to shoe buying and foot care

Produced by **The Society of Shoe Fitters**

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The information in this leaflet has been written to help you understand the essentials of good shoe fitting, the problems you may encounter and how to avoid them.

One of the most important yet most abused parts of the human body is our feet. Feet are designed to take body weight and give mobility. Whilst vast amounts of money are spent in educating people to look after themselves nutritionally and physically, little effort is made to educate them on the importance of foot health. Feet are often crammed into the most unsuitably shaped shoes (often made of plastic). The only time feet are given a thought is when they hurt. There is no doubt that from birth to early teens feet are at their most vulnerable, in fact there are 26 bones in the foot, and they do not completely ossify (harden) until around the age of eighteen. Qualified Shoe Fitters and Chiropodists spend the majority of their time trying to correct damage and ease discomfort that could have been avoided if shoes had been correctly fitted when purchased.

Useful pointers when buying footwear:-

- 1) **Have feet measured by a qualified fitter.** Do not be afraid to ask what qualification the staff have attained in your shoe shop. Both feet should always be measured for size and width, because one foot may be different from the other. The larger foot usually dictates the size needed.
- 2) **A fitting gauge is merely a guide.** Fitting Gauges all vary in calibration. Sizes and fittings vary dependent on style, country of origin, manufacturer etc. There is no standardisation of shoe sizing in the UK that is why a qualified shoe fitter is so important to interpret the correct shoe for the shape of the foot. What it says on the Fitting Gauge may not be the size or fitting you actually require, it is only a starting point.
- 3) **Feet may be “measured” sitting or standing and foot gauges are calibrated accordingly,** but the final assessment should be made whilst standing, as the feet spread when standing weight is applied.
- 4) **Buy footwear made of natural materials** e.g. leather, cotton etc. as these materials breathe and mould to your foot. Man-made materials e.g. plastic; make feet perspire and return to their original shape - this can cause fungal infections and abrasions. Some materials have been treated with chemicals to allow them to breathe i.e. Goretex and Sympatex, and these are often found in linings, leisurewear and clothing.
- 5) **Look after your shoes.** Polish them and they will look better and last longer. Protect nubuck with spray before wearing to keep clean and repel water.
- 6) **Diabetics** should take extra special care of their feet and eyes; they can be problem areas. Shoes should always be comfortable, and feet kept warm and dry. Make sure shoes and hosiery are secure – but not tight.
- 7) **Wear the right shoe for the right occasion!** Buy your shoes before your outfit – your shoes will stay on longer than your hat, and will be worn far more often than your clothes. Comfortable feet will keep you smiling for the photographs!
- 8) **When does a child need their first pair of shoes?** The simple answer is “when the child is walking most of the day and wants to walk outside”. At that time the child needs a pair of shoes to protect his or her feet. This can be between seven months and two years. Never push your child to walk if they are not ready, just because your friend's child has been walking for months.
- 9) **Look for shoes that are available in different fittings.** The type of shoes you choose for an infant should be designed around the shape of the feet (slim at the heel and wide at the front). Ideally they should also be made in a variety of width fittings, after all there is no standardisation of shoe sizing and feet do not conform to a standard either.
- 10) Children's shoes with a lace/strap/Velcro fastening across the instep, allow for a finer adjustment without restriction, giving a better overall fit.
- 11) **Never rely on the question “do they feel comfortable?” when fitting very young children.** Distortion and cramping can be present without feeling pain and discomfort, and children will often say shoes are comfortable if they like them! If in doubt ask a Supervisor for a second opinion at the time of purchase.
- 12) **Children's shoes should be professionally checked for correct fit every 4-6 weeks for infants (0-3 years) 6-8 weeks (3-4 years) and 10-12 weeks thereafter.** That is not to say your child will need new shoes each time their feet are measured - a qualified shoe fitter will not sell a pair of shoes unless needed, and will be happy to measure and advise accordingly. Children's feet grow erratically in fits and starts; during this period feet can grow by at least half a size, so it is wise to regularly visit your fitter for advice. Walk out of any shop that asks you the size of your child's foot and then takes your word for it without checking.
- 13) **Never hand shoes down,** they take on the shape of the previous wearer – they will rub and not support in vital areas and can harbour infections.
- 14) **Monitor your child's sock drawer** and discard outgrown or misshapen socks. Buy cotton or wool socks, avoid stretch socks, and check toe seams for a “casting-off” knot that can rub toes (particularly important if you have diabetes). Socks and baby-grows that are too small at the toes, will restrict growth and circulation.
- 15) No one style of shoe has been designed or constructed to meet all of your child's needs. Structured shoes are needed for every day support, plimsolls and trainers for sports and occasional wear, and Wellingtons for wet conditions.
- 16) Saturday's are the busiest days for shopping, so if you and your child need advice, try to find a quieter time in the week to seek assistance.

To keep your feet fit and healthy, you may like to try some exercises overleaf? However, if you have any concerns about your feet, always seek professional advice from your Podiatrist or G.P. and for shoe related queries; a qualified Shoe Fitter from The Society of Shoe Fitters.

Osteo-Arthritis & Rheumatoid Arthritis: Painful joints are associated with the above and both are medical conditions that should be treated by your doctor. Exercise of the joints help to keep them warm and assist circulation and flexibility, and a qualified Reflexologist may give some comfort. Toes may lift and cross one another which can rub and create corns and calluses' and your footwear may become misshapen.

What to do: After visiting your Doctor, seek the advice of your Chiropodist and shoe fitter as they can add orthosis to your footwear and recommend the right shoes to take the pressure off. Keep your feet warm, and manipulate your bones to aid circulation.

Toenails: There are various problems and conditions associated with toenails, usually due to damage or possibly neglect at some point. Common conditions are fungal infections, thickening of the toe nail and ingrown toenails.

What to do: Prevention is the keyword. Much can be done at home by regular pedicures when bathing. Most importantly cut toenails to the shape of the toe with a gentle curve to take off sharp edges and prevent ingrown nails. Toenails can ruin hosiery and footwear. Your Doctor or Chiropodist will have seen most problems associated with toe nails and will treat accordingly.

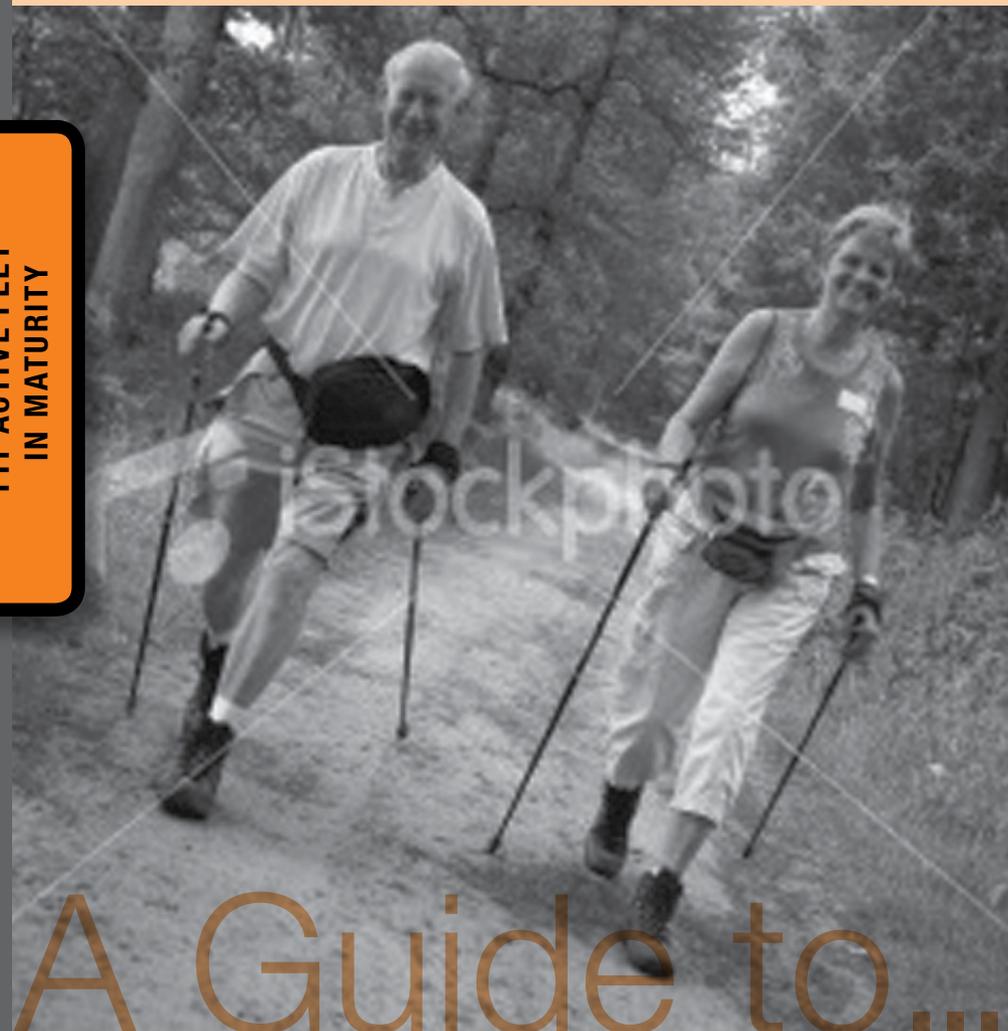
Whatever the problem, when buying shoes make sure that:-

- 1) You visit a shop with a qualified shoe fitter in attendance. It will not cost you more to have your shoes professionally fitted, and will ensure that you have the correct fitting shoes suitable for the purpose intended.
- 2) The shoes fit correctly. Ensure that shoes fit snugly around the foot and that they are not "sloppy". Ideally a fastening such as a bar, lace or ankle strap should be used to ensure that the shoes stay positioned correctly on the foot and can be adjusted for hosiery.
- 3) Ensure shoes are the correct width in the toe box. Your toes should not be too cramped or able to "swim around" in a shoe, as both cases will lead to further foot health issues i.e. rubbing, blisters, corns etc.
- 4) There is enough depth in the toe box to accommodate your toes and allow them to function correctly. A shallow toe box can rub the top of the toes.
- 5) Ensure that shoes are stable and have support around the ankle.
- 6) Ensure that when trying shoes on, you are wearing the intended hosiery to be worn with that footwear.
- 7) Buy the right shoe for the right occasion!

Remember that in all cases it is important to:-

- Keep feet clean
- Cut toe nails to shape, not down at sides or they may become ingrown.
- Have fresh hosiery daily
- Buy correctly fitted footwear and hosiery
- Change shoes daily to allow the moisture retained from wearing the shoe to disperse.
- Do not worry alone. Always seek the advice of professionals i.e. Doctors, Chiropodists or Shoe Fitters at the start of the problem, they are trained to advise you.

FIT ACTIVE FEET
IN MATURITY



A Guide to...

Fit active feet in maturity

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Our feet are one of the hardest working parts of our body. In an average life time we walk over 75,000 miles, yet little attention is paid to our feet.

Because of this wear and tear, older people tend to suffer from various foot problems, whether it is bunions, hammer toes, swollen feet or other conditions. It is important that shoes fit correctly and are suitable for purpose. Here are some of the more common foot ailments, and overleaf you will find some helpful hints to prevent them.

Foot Ailments

Bunions: are “adventitious bursae” or the “red wobbly bit” on the side of an enlarged joint. These develop in response to pressure put on the joint. Badly fitted or narrow, pointed shoes can cause them. A Hallux Valgus is when the big toe is deviated toward the smaller toes creating a bigger toe joint – some believe it is an hereditary condition. It can be initiated by ill fitting footwear.

What to do: Seek professional medical advice as various options are available to deal with this condition, and ensure your footwear is suitably fitted.

Corns, Calluses and Blisters: Corns are pressure induced, starving the skin of life support systems i.e. oxygen. These are more often found on mature feet in bony areas that have had ill fitting footwear for some time. Adolescents can develop a heel bump through a shoe back slipping, causing continual abrasion. Hard skin builds up becoming unsightly or blisters may blow up into watery lumps which may burst, thus creating an open wound.

What to do: Moisturising creams will help. Visit your chiropodist / podiatrist as they will remove the offending build up of skin and recommend protective dressings. Immediately discard footwear that rubs and ensure that future pairs are correctly fitted. Check hosiery for “casting off” knots on seams that can chafe.

Chilblains: This is a circulatory problem associated with cold weather. Chilblains will itch and burn and become itchier still when warm. On first appearance they will be slightly purple, turning red and swollen. It is tempting to scratch, but this can break and ulcerate the chilblain.

What to do: Prevention is definitely better than a cure. Before severe cold weather arrives, ensure feet are kept warm, do not walk bare-foot on cold surfaces. Do not wear tight fitting footwear or socks. Avoid extremes of temperature. Do not put feet in front of direct heat or on radiators or hot water bottles. Reflexology is good for wheel-chair users as they will help circulation. Calamine lotion and witch hazel are both soothing and cooling, whilst antiseptic should be applied to broken chilblains until medical attention is sought.

Gout: Gout is a painful form of arthritis and more often found in the big toe, due to too much uric acid in bodily fluids. Can be hereditary, but affected by diet and alcohol intake. Joints become agonisingly swollen so that they cannot bear the least touch.

What to do: Your Doctor will give greatest assistance and will prescribe as necessary. Footwear needs to be wide and deep during an attack, to accommodate the increase in foot size and allowing toes to move.

Athlete’s Foot: An irritating itchy disorder that appears as white skin and sometimes small blisters between the toes. The affected area may become red, cracked, sore and weepy with scratching.

What to do: Antifungal powders and creams are available from chemists – follow the instructions carefully. Keep feet as dry, clean and cool as possible, this infection thrives in warm damp areas. Avoid synthetic hosiery and powder shoe linings. Keep to your own towel.

Verrucae: (Latin for wart). We mostly think of children having Verrucae, but with people keeping fit at all ages, using swimming pools and communal changing areas, any age can find a Verrucae as they are highly contagious. The centre of the wart spot contains small spots of red, brown or black which are the worn ends of capillary loops. Verrucae can be quite painful.

What to do: Your chemist can offer you proprietary products, or consult your Doctor or Chiropodist (especially if diabetic), as they will prescribe as necessary. Protective over socks are available for bathing areas from chemists and sports shops.

Sweaty Feet and Foot Odour: (Hyperhidrosis and Bromidrosis) Our feet have more sweat glands per centimetre, than any part of our body – approximately 250,000, and we perspire from them an eggcup full of moisture daily. The bacteria within this perspiration cling happily to our hosiery, feet and footwear - particularly within trainers as they have so much padding to absorb this moisture and this can lead to bad odours and fungal infections.

What to do: Keep feet and hosiery clean and dry. Allow footwear to dry out naturally. Alternate your shoes to allow them to dry thoroughly. Do not dry out over heat or your shoes will crack. Wear natural materials close to the feet i.e. leather for footwear, cotton or wool for hosiery, as these are natural products allowing moisture to be released. Scented or charcoal insoles are available from chemists, but do not use them if they make your shoes too tight.

Diabetes: As diabetes affects the nerve endings it is difficult for diabetics to feel the onset of a foot problem. Because feet are more often out of sight and therefore out of mind, most Doctors and Podiatrists go to great lengths to warn of foot health problems associated with diabetes, as they can be prone to ulcers. Gangrene can in extreme cases be an occasional complication.

What to do: Observe daily hygiene and dry your feet carefully. Ensure that correctly fitted footwear is worn. Shoes that are too tight will restrict blood to the foot, and shoes that are too loose will allow the foot to move in the shoe, both potentially causing blisters. Always seek medical advice. Do not dwell on worries however small they may seem.