



## Proper Shoe Fit

Finding shoes that fit your feet properly is incredibly important. If you require the use of foot orthotics, ensure your shoes aid and complement your treatment, not negate it. If you notice your patient is wearing improper footwear, it is important to explain the effects of footwear when it comes to their foot health and the effectiveness of your treatment. As well, whenever you prescribe a set of foot orthotics and your patients have questions about shoes, keep these tips handy for reference.

What to look for in a shoe that will accommodate orthotics:

- Try to find shoes with a **removeable insole**, and those that advertise being orthotic-friendly. These have been designed specially with these features.
- Toe box: this is the front part of the shoe where your toes lie. **Ensure the toe box is wide and deep.** This is especially important if your shoe does not have a removable insole to ensure your orthotic will fit inside and still leave room for your feet.
- Size- try a shoe that is 1/2- 1 full size larger than your usual size. This ensures your orthotic and your foot have adequate space
- Laces or straps are recommended that can give you a snug fit. The tongue should be only attached at the end, not along the side- this allows a more adjustable fit and will be easier to get in to. On the other hand, a shoe that is too loose may encourage compensation, including toe clenching, which leads to other issues.
- Heel counter- this is the material that hugs your heel. It should be firm in order to properly seat and secure the heel. Squeeze the sides together and check the firmness.
- Forefoot rocker- shoes in which there is a slight raise in the forefoot/toe area are better than those where this part sits flat on the ground. This aids in proper and effective progression of the gait cycle.
- Heel height- the best heel height may depend on your individual needs. Typically, a 1/2" or less is preferred. Many times, a prescribed heel raise will be incorporated into your orthotics as opposed to the shoes.
- Flexibility- shoes should be flexible enough to allow for normal motions of the foot and ankle, but firm enough to actually provide support.
- Shape- With kids and adults, shoes should fit your foot shape. Forefoots are always wider than heels, and both feet and shoes come in a variety of widths. Many brands offer a variety of widths.
  - Widths available from narrow to wide (non-inclusive of custom made orthopedic footwear:
  - 2A, A, B, D, 2D, E, 2E, 4E. The standard width for women is B, the standard width for men is D.
- Try on shoes at the end of the day, to accommodate any swelling or changes that naturally occur throughout the day.
- Comfort: after all is said and done, you need a shoe that is comfortable, and that you will feel good wearing.



**Paragon**  
ORTHOTIC LABORATORY

# Anatomy of a Shoe

