

Choosing the correct shoe is one of the most important features to get right when you have foot & Ankle pain - They are like the foundations of a building - everything else that follows will rely on the correct shoe being used.

Recommended footwear features

A well-fitting shoe with a robust sole (bottom of shoe) that resists twisting and bending at the mid-section, which also has laces or fastening straps to keep it secure will give your feet the best support and protection.



- Fastenings such as laces or Velcro straps will keep your foot firmly in place, preventing slipping & rubbing.
- The sole unit (bottom of shoe) should be 1 piece or a continuous unit which is best for walking & running.
- Ensure sufficient space (width and depth) in the toe-box to prevent squashing & rubbing of the toes.
- The heel should not be more than 25mm or 1 inch high.
- The uppers (top) of your shoes should be made from a supportive but supple material, to reduce rubbing and provide suitable support.
- **Avoid** slip-on shoes and slippers.
- **Avoid** very flat, flexible and unsupportive or worn out shoes.
- **Avoid** separate heel and sole type shoes.
- **Avoid** high heels.



Rocker-soled footwear

Sometimes we recommend rocker soled shoes to help with certain foot and ankle problems.

These shoes mainly help to reduce pressures to the forefoot but are helpful for lots of foot & Ankle problems.

They have thick soles which taper toward the toes from just behind the ball of the forefoot. This allows the shoe to rock forward as you walk -or if you press down on the toe area.



Rocker soles are commonly found on shoes and boots with stiff soles such as walking boots and shoes, but there are lots of other options available.

Be careful lots of shoes roll up at the toe, this is called **toe spring**. It helps your foot to clear the ground when you walk. If the sole is not sufficiently stiff the shoe will not function as a rocker.

New shoes

You should never have to 'break your shoes in' if they are not comfortable when you try them on they are not right for you.

It is reasonable to wear your new shoes in for a while, this helps you adjust to a new style that you may not have worn before.

You can wear them around the house for short periods (20-30 minutes) to acclimatise to them and then check your feet -looking for problems such as redness from rubbing/pressure.

If this happens you can usually return them to the retailer- providing they are not soiled or have not been worn outside.

If you're happy with your new shoes start wearing them outdoors for a few hours at a time and gradually build up the use.



How do I know if my shoes are worn out?

Look at wear and tear such as loss of tread pattern, compressed sole, torn stitching and ripped seams. A robust shoe is one that maintains its structure under the pressures of walking & running and supports the foot. Give the shoe a firm flex and twist to the middle section of the sole to see how well it retains its structure. If shoes are showing signs of wear and tear it is best to replace them and discard the old ones.



Don't be tempted to use your old shoes for D.I.Y or gardening – there is a reason why they are your old shoes!!

Where can I buy the shoes you are recommending?

We do not endorse any particular brands but below are some useful links to help you choose suitable footwear. Trainers are a useful shoe for day to day use that are lightweight, supportive comfortable and readily available.

- **Healthy footwear guide.** Created by UK podiatrists and shoe manufacturers who have identified key features of a healthy shoe. www.healthy-footwear-guide.com/
- **DB Wider fit.** (Good for bunions and hammer toes) www.widerfitshoes.co.uk
- **Cosyfeet.** (Extra wide sizes) www.cosyfeet.com
- **Nike Air Max.** (Ideal casual trainer with robust sole) www.nike.com/air-max
- **Hoka One One.** (Lightweight wide fit running trainers – useful as a comfy general walking shoe) www.hokaoneone.eu
- **JML Walkmaxx.** – (Good rocker-soled shoes) www.jmldirect.com/health-and-beauty/clothing/walkmaxx-blackfit-wide-supportive-posture-friendly-exercise-shoe
- www.grisport.co.uk – Good generous width walking and leisure shoes and boots

If you have any queries or concerns regarding footwear - please feel free to call the Podiatry department for further advice on 01633 615225 option 1 or risca.podiatry@wales.nhs.uk

**“This document is available in Welsh /
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg”.**