

Ten point Checklist when buying everyday walking shoes:

1. Length
2. Width at the ball of foot
3. Width at the toes
4. Depth of the shoe at the toes
5. Good Fastenings and not slip on
6. No rough internal seams
7. Wide heel for stability
8. Heel height not greater than 2.5cm
9. Soft leather uppers
10. Cushioned sole with an appropriate level of grip depending on your mobility and the surfaces to be walked on.

If you have “neuropathy” (a complication of diabetes resulting in foot numbness) then a common mistake is to buy shoes that illicit a “feeling” that the shoes are touching your feet. In reality those shoes can be much too tight. A pair of shoes the right size may feel too big to you as the shoes are only gently touching the skin and you cannot feel them.

Other Leaflets in this series:

“Buying Retail Shoes”

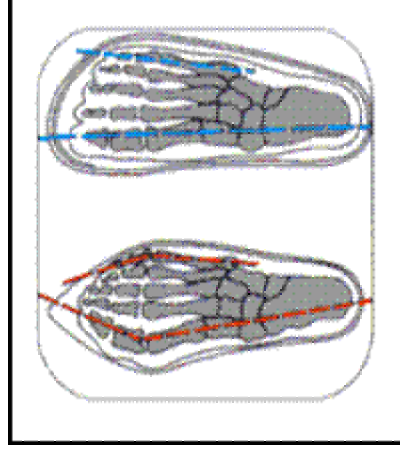
“Advice for Low Risk Feet”

“Advice for Increased Risk Feet”

“Advice for High Risk Feet”

# Chiropods

## Buying Retail Shoes



This guide is part of a series dealing with issues affecting people with Diabetes

This leaflet tries to provide some help and advice in the difficult area of buying retail shoes.

### What to do if you have problems finding retail shoes that fit?

Some companies specialise in providing shoes for difficult feet to find shoes for or your GP/Consultant will refer you for NHS footwear.

CosyFeet

Hip to Toe, The Tanyard, Leigh Road,  
Street, Somerset BA16 0HR  
01458 447275  
[www.cosyfeet.com](http://www.cosyfeet.com)

However please check returns policy for any mail order company as a sizing mistake is more likely with mail order



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## Retail Shoe Sizing Systems

When buying shoes the first thing people think about is what size they are. They think they know their size already. They think that since they have stopped growing as an adult their foot will not change.

However the first thing you need to realise is that despite the efforts to standardize shoe sizes, they vary wildly between different manufacturers, different countries and even different shoe styles made by the same manufacturer.

So shoe sizing systems developed over the years differ quite substantially in different parts of the world.

Size gauges also differ between manufacturers and countries. They also measure different things. Some gauges use a scale to measure the size of the foot; however shoes are not made on feet but on shoe "lasts". This allows for a bit of room for your toes, so some gauges measure the actual shoe size which in turn can be one and a half to two sizes larger than a gauge measuring a foot size.

Everything clear as mud! So any shoe sizing system can only act as a guide and you mustn't be rigid over the size you think you are, if one size or two larger seems to fit better than the size you thought you were when you entered a shop then you should buy the shoe that fits and is comfortable and not the pair of shoes because they were your usual size.

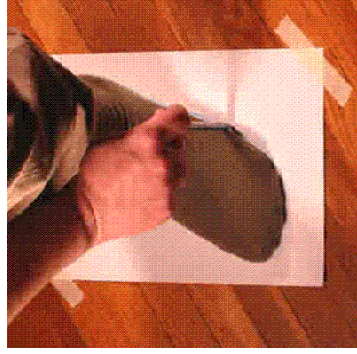
## Shopping for shoes

Well first of all our feet tend to swell throughout the day so a pair of shoes bought in the morning may feel too tight by the afternoon. So as a general rule we advise you to buy shoes in the afternoon.

If you suffer from neuropathy (foot numbness), prepare before the shopping trip starts. Use thin card (not paper), a dismantled cereal box will do, and place your foot on it and get a friend or relative to carefully, with an ordinary biro, draw an outline of your foot keeping the pen upright at all times.

Cut out this outline and repeat for the other foot. Label the templates left and right before you forget which way around the templates were.

Then on a shopping trip after finding a suitable style of shoe you should slide the card template carefully inside the shoe you want to try.



If the template cannot lie flat or when it does lie flat it has folded up at the edge, then that shoe is too short or too narrow and should not be bought no matter how suitable it is in terms of colour, style or desirability.

If the template lays flat look inside to see how close to the end of the shoe it comes. There should be at least 1cm space at the end of the shoe. Shoes are kept on by the fastenings not by cramping the toes inside the shoe.

If the template fits, then look at the shoe from the side to judge whether the shoe is deep enough at the toe end. If it passes this test then feel inside the shoe with your fingers. Can you feel any rough edges or seams that may rub or irritate any parts of your feet?

Finally you should try the shoe on and walk around the shop for quite a long time.

Ask yourself:

- Can I do the fastenings up?
- Do the shoes feel comfortable?
- Do I feel stable when I am walking?
- Is the heel height suitable for walking?

Remember the higher the heel the more pressure on the forefoot. So if you have callus or deformities at the forefoot or the toes, then a higher heel may lead to pressure, callus and ulceration.

Sandals are not recommended for diabetic patients with neuropathy. Shoes and sandals should always have a covered heel. "Mule" style open backed heels leads to heavy callus and fissuring around the edge of the heel which can easily get infected and ulcerate.

Remember be careful with your feet