The Importance of the Right Shoes for RA

by AMY MANLEY

Choosing Shoes For Rheumatoid Arthritis

Not many people realize the importance of good shoes, but when you have RA, they can make all the difference. In most cases, those with RA experience a lot of discomfort in the foot and ankle area. Sometimes the discomfort can lead to high levels of pain, making the simple act of walking difficult.

According to the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, the foot and ankle area are often the first to see the symptoms of RA. By learning more about the importance of good shoes, and what shoes are known for being most beneficial for RA patients, you can reduce the pain and discomfort in your lower extremities.

The Importance of a Good Shoe

Wearing high quality shoes that offer the right amount of support is not only important for RA patients, but for everyone. However, due to the pain and discomfort RA patients experience, wearing the right shoes becomes even more important. When you do not wear the right shoes with RA, you can cause damage to your bones and compromise your quality of life. Studies have shown almost everyone with RA will notice an improvement in their overall comfort level when they use the following tips to pick the right pair of shoes.

Picking the Right Shoes for RA

- **Look for support:** Support is the most important aspect of the shoes you pick for RA. Without the right amount of support, you can have every other quality in your shoes, yet you won't get the benefits. With the right amount of support, your shoes will protect your joints and take pressure off the bones within the foot and ankle area. Additionally, cushion works to absorb shock, which is essential for preventing damage to the bones in RA patients.

- **Space in the front:** Not allowing for enough space in the front of your shoe will cause your toes to get cramped, leading to bone damage, bunions, and additional pain within the foot area. To prevent this, choose shoes that are wide toed, deep, and offer extra room within the heel. You want to choose shoe that have at least a fingers length of extra room within both the front back combined.
- **Opt for flats:** When you have RA, avoiding high heels altogether is ideal. While some people enjoy wearing heals, the pain they cause isn't worth it in the end. Even though it's suggested to not wear heels, if you find wearing them a must, keep them under an inch and a half, preferably more towards a half inch. You should also use protective inserts and only wear them for short periods of time – an hour or two max. After wearing the heels, using a foot soak like Epson salt can reduce swelling and discomfort.