



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

How to Choose Safe Shoes to Prevent Falling

This information explains how you can help prevent falls by wearing safe shoes.

About Shoe Safety

The shoes you wear can affect your comfort and safety. Wearing unsafe shoes can make you more likely to fall and hurt yourself. You should always wear safe shoes, including inside your home, to help prevent falls.

Safe shoes

Safe shoes are shoes that fit well, are comfortable, are in good condition, and have features that help keep you from falling (see Figure 1).

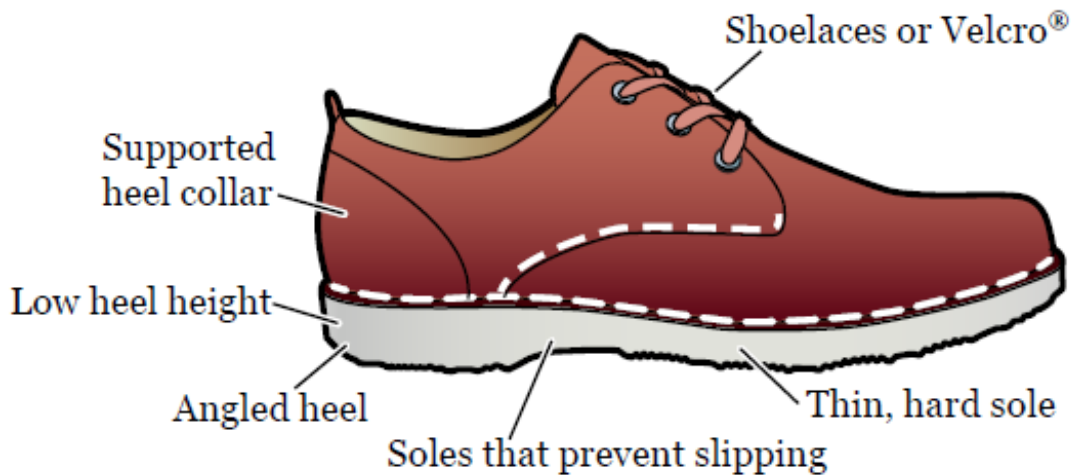


Figure 1. Safe shoe

Safe shoes have:

- Heels that are 1 inch (1.6 centimeters) or lower
- A way to close the shoe so that it stays on your foot (such as shoelaces or Velcro®)
- Thin, hard soles

- Soles that prevent slipping
- A supported heel collar, which grips your heel firmly
- An angled heel to prevent slipping

Unsafe shoes

Unsafe shoes don't fit well, are uncomfortable, or are in poor condition. Unsafe shoes have:

- Heels that are greater than 1 inch (1.6 centimeters)
- No way of securing your foot in the shoe (such as slip-on shoes, slippers, clogs, or flip flops)
- Soft or thick soles
- Soles that are slippery or worn out

Tips for Putting On and Taking Off Shoes

If you have a hard time putting on or taking off your shoes:

- Use a shoe horn with a long handle to help you put on shoes if you can't reach down to your feet (see Figure 2).
- Use elastic shoelaces so you don't have to tie and untie your shoes when you put them on and take them off.
- Wear shoes with Velcro instead of shoelaces. Velcro is easier to fasten.



Figure 2. Using a shoe horn

If you have a hard time putting on or taking off shoes because your feet are swollen:

- Talk with your healthcare provider about treatment options, including physical therapy treatment for edema (swelling of your legs).
- Consider wearing wider shoes that close with Velcro.

If you have foot pain and can't wear shoes, talk with your healthcare provider about a referral to a podiatrist (foot doctor). The podiatrist can recommend orthotics (shoe inserts that provide extra foot support) or arch supports to help you feel more comfortable when wearing shoes.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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