

Media Release

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HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGE AVAILABLE

A podiatrist's 'killer heels' survival guide for women who love fashion

Rather than wagging a finger of caution at 'killer' high heels like those modeled during Air New Zealand Fashion Week 2008, one podiatrist shares how women can wear high heels without damaging their feet.

John Miller, general manager and lead podiatrist of Foot Mechanics says the modern women's love affair with high heels means they have become an essential part of the wardrobe, and are not going out of fashion.

"High heels make your legs look longer, bottom smaller and can convert you from a drab 'shopper' to a diva 'spectacular' and no podiatrist would dare to tell you otherwise," says Miller.

"But 'high' heels can become 'killer' heels causing problems ranging from blisters, corns and calluses to serious foot, knee and back pain," he says.

Foot Mechanics have discovered and are promoting the 'G' Factor of High Heels – glamour, glide, guide and give – four easy tips to help women enjoy wearing high heels without damaging their feet:

Glamour – Let high heels give you that extra 'sparkle' and save wearing them only for glamorous occasions. Try limit wearing them to around three hours. And the height of heels, even for the most 'A-list' of events, should not be so high you have trouble walking. For everyday wear, keep heel heights to 4cm or less.

Glide – Do not look like you're rushing to catch a bus.... slow down, take smaller steps and shorten your stride when wearing high heels. Put the heel down first and glide. Not only will this minimise damage to your feet, but in fact, Lady Di wore lower heels as her long legs and slender frame didn't allow her to wear high-heels and glide elegantly.

Guide – Let the experts guide you into buying the right size shoe. According to A study by the American Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society found that 88 percent of women in the United States wear shoes that are too small and 55 percent have bunions.

Bunions are nine times more common in women than men. The most common cause of bunions is poor foot function but the prolonged wearing of poorly fitting shoes, usually those with a narrow, pointed toe box that squeezes the toes into an unnatural position can accelerate the problem.

Miller says from his experience the percentage is likely to be similar here in New Zealand.

“Sizes vary according to the brand and style, so you need to be sure to have shoes correctly fitted and check there's up to half an inch of space in the shoe beyond the longest toe and that the shoes are not too narrow. Also, nip any foot related problems in the bud to avoid them getting worse and before they impact on your lifestyle,” says Miller.

Give – Give your feet some extra special attention during and after wearing high heels. Exercise the calf, heel and foot muscles by stretching them out to increase circulation and help them relax – you can even do it while standing at the bar waiting for a drink! Give your feet a moisturising massage when you get home to again help your foot muscles relax and restore some of the essential moisture you lose wearing backless, or open-toe heels.

Miller says following Foot Mechanics' four simple 'G' Factor tips means all women can experience and enjoy high heels.

Foot Mechanics recently released results of their first foot health survey which suggested the majority of New Zealanders stand on their feet for eight to 10 hours per day. Miller says when people are on their feet all day long the impact on foot positioning can have serious detrimental longer term effects especially on hips, knees, ankles, and the lower back.

Image file: *Foot Mechanics image high heels1.jpg*

Caption for image: *“High heels can be worn safely – they just need to know how.”*

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About Foot Mechanics

Foot Mechanics has clinics in Auckland, Bay of Plenty, Waikato and Manawatu regions and are experienced providers for some of New Zealand's top sport teams including the All Blacks, Silver Ferns and Black Caps. For more information on Foot Mechanics Podiatry visit www.footmechanics.com