

# Fit for Life Independent



# Life

## Happy Feet – Safe Footwear and Falls Prevention

### Common foot problems associated with age

With age we see changes in feet that are associated with reduced walking speed and difficulty performing day to day activities. These impairments are now independently linked to changes in balance and functional test performance. The challenge with these is an increased risk of falls. Common foot changes we see are:

- Bunions
- Hammertoes
- Claw toes
- Arthritis
- Musculoskeletal structure of foot - subject to degeneration and deformity



(inappropriate footwear may challenge integrity of musculoskeletal system  
With these foot changes it is key that appropriate footwear is worn to protect the foot and ankle to provide the necessary support and stability for the foot)

## What are the risks of unsafe footwear?



**No support for heel, foot slides around in shoe**



**Large, loose fitting foot bed provides poor support**

Unsafe footwear has been identified as an environmental risk factor for falls, both indoors and outdoors.

### Factors that have been shown to increase risk are:

- slippery soles
- slippers
- high heels
- no heel support
- not wearing any footwear
- soft sole
- ill-fitting shoes
- poor fixation on shoes

### Important questions to ask are:

- How old are my shoes?
- Are the straps, velcro and heel area still in good condition?
- Is the shoe wide enough?
- Do they provide support, grip, and comfort?
- Do they fit my feet correctly considering the age rel

## Safe footwear

- Shoe length is 6 mm (1/4 ") longer than your longest toe
- Toe box is as wide as your toes
- Sole has a good grip but does not stick to carpet
- Heel counter/height is 6mm to 2.5 cm (1/4" to 1" high)
- Heel is rounded and wide to give more contact with the ground
- Back of shoe covers the heel to provide support and prevent slipping
- Laces or Velcro closure allow a snug fit and allow for swelling



## What can you do to promote safe footwear?

Educating your team and family on the importance of safe footwear as a falls prevention measure would be your starting point.

We often observe that finance, comfort and habit aspects outweigh safety when considering footwear for the resident either by themselves or their family/carer.

- You could offer information to new residents and family.
- Put a Safe Footwear policy in place in your home.
- Provide education to your team on safe footwear.
- Check footwear regularly as people stand on the heels and wear and tear occurs.

***We hope this information helps in some way but please feel free to contact us with questions or queries on any of the content. Click [here](#) if you would like to download a printable version of this newsletter or any of our previous newsletters.***



## About us

Since 2001 Fit For Life has been empowering our adult and ageing population to remain as active and independent as possible to ensure that they achieve and maintain the best quality of life possible.

Fit For Life provide an extensive range of specialised training for healthcare professionals, therapists and carers to improve the care and wellbeing for the older adult and elderly population. Other services include, risk assessments, audits and reports, building and environment recommendations, and independent living services.

We pride ourselves on the team we have working with our older population and we are very excited to share our knowledge and expertise with you to ensure our older population receive best practice care.

Some of the areas of specialised training we deliver include:

- [Manual Handling – Mandatory, Refresher, and non-people manual handling courses](#)
- [Advanced Hoist and Sling Workshops](#)
- [Falls Prevention - Common Risk Factors, Falls Policy, System and Audits](#)
- [Group Exercise Delivery - Foundation Level, Dementia specific and advanced falls prevention](#)
- [Sitting posture, seating, positioning](#)
- [Pressure care and cushions](#)
- [Positioning and repositioning](#)
- [Transfers and Mobilising](#)
- [Stroke Positioning and Handling](#)
- [Restraints](#)