

# Winter Footwear Guidelines

Contact: Amie Hornbaker  
301.581.9221  
aehornbaker@apma.org

**APMA**  
American Podiatric Medical Association

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## Boot Buying 101

When is the last time you had your feet measured? Your shoes may say size seven, but your feet might be crying out for an eight. Stuffing feet into the wrong size shoe is nothing new for women. According to a recent survey conducted by the American Podiatric (**Pō-dē-ä-trick**) Medical Association (APMA), 65 percent of American women between the ages of 18 to 49 haven't had their feet measured within the last five years—meaning they are probably walking around in shoes that don't fit their feet. Many people don't realize foot size can change with age, especially for women during pregnancy. Not to mention, a shoe's size can vary based on the manufacturer.

Ill-fitting shoes can wreak havoc on the feet from painful blisters and unsightly corns to unnerving neuromas and irritating bunions. APMA podiatric physicians offer ten boot buying pointers to ensure women everywhere put their best boots forward this winter.

 Shop for shoes later in the day; feet tend to swell during the day, and it's best to be fitted when they are at their largest.

 Have your feet measured while you're standing.

 Always buy for the larger foot; feet are seldom precisely the same size. It's okay to buy a half size larger, especially if the shoe has a pointy toe box.

 Try to select a shoe with a leather upper, stiff heel counter, appropriate cushioning, and flexibility at the ball of the foot.

 Look for a boot that provides stability. A wider heel, less than two inches in height is best.

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 Always try on both shoes, and walk around the store, preferably a hard surface.

 Don't buy shoes that need a "break-in" period; shoes should be comfortable immediately.

 Try on shoes while you're wearing the same type of socks or stockings you expect to wear with the shoes.

 If you wear prescription orthotics—biomechanical inserts prescribed by a podiatric physician—you should take them along to shoe fittings.

 Select a boot with a rubber sole and traction on the bottom to curtail slipping. Remember, most fashion boots are not made for the snow.

| Boot Style   | Key Points  | What to look for   |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Wedge,<br/>Pointy Toe-Box</p>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wedge heel provides the foot with more ground contact but should not be excessively high.</li> <li>Pointy toe-box contributes to bunions, hammertoes and ingrown toenails.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choose wedges with a wider toe-box and/or a foot extension providing toes more room.</li> <li>Look for cork wedge heels, which aid in shock absorption, especially in winter conditions.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Stiletto,<br/>Rounded Toe-Box</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stiletto heel causes excessive weight to be exerted on the ball of the foot, which can trigger severe pain.</li> <li>Narrow width of the heel makes the foot unstable causing an increased risk of tripping or twisting an ankle.</li> <li>Lacks ankle support.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Try a lower or wedge heel instead. With a wider heel you have more stability and there's less pressure on the ball of foot.</li> </ul>  |

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| Boot Style   | Key Points  | What to look for   |
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| Riding or Flat Boot, Square Toe-Box<br>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structure of the boot provides good support and contour but may cause arch pain if the soles are too flat.</li> </ul>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Try getting fitted for custom arch supports or orthotics that fit inside the boot providing increased comfort and stability.</li> </ul> |
| Kitten Heel, Ankle Boot, Pointy Toe-Box<br> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heel is an appropriate height but too narrow, providing a minimal platform for stability.</li> <li>Narrow toe-box can cause foot deformities.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choose a boot with a wider heel and a wider toe-box.</li> </ul>   |