



PPMA UPDATE

Pennsylvania Podiatric Medical Association



Canvas is on the Move: Why Flat-Sole Shoes Should Be Your New Gym Essential

**Sabrina Minhas, DPM and Zoreed Mukhtar, MS-3
Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine**

When you think of gym shoes, you probably picture sleek, brightly colored high-tech sneakers designed for comfort, support, and performance. But what if we told you that a simple, flat-soled canvas shoe, like a Converse Chuck Taylor, Vans, or Keds, could actually give you an edge in the weight room? While you may find that hard to believe, swapping your running shoes for a flat-soled canvas shoe could actually improve your performance in the gym.

Here's why ditching the extra cushioning might be the best move for your training:

A More Stable Foundation: A solid base is essential when lifting heavy. Unlike running shoes, which are built with thick, cushioned soles to absorb impact, canvas shoes keep you closer to the ground. This makes a difference in exercises like squats, deadlifts, and lunges, where force generation starts at the feet.

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BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Thick, foamy soles can create an unstable surface, forcing your body to work harder to maintain balance. In contrast, a flat, rubber sole allows for better weight distribution through the heels and midfoot, leading to better form and stronger lifts. If you've ever felt wobbly at the bottom of a squat, your shoes might be to blame. A stable base isn't just about comfort; it's about maximizing force transfer and reducing unnecessary strain on your joints.

Better Muscle Engagement: Minimalist footwear isn't just about stability; it also affects how your muscles work. Running shoes, with their arch support and cushioning, absorb some of the force your body naturally generates. While great for long-distance running, this can reduce activation in stabilizing muscles during weightlifting. Flat shoes encourage greater proprioception, or your body's ability to sense movement and position. Without excessive support doing the work for you, your feet, ankles, and calves engage more actively, leading to better balance and long-term strength gains. For those who enjoy lifting barefoot but need a bit of protection, canvas shoes offer the best of both worlds - a natural feel with just enough coverage.

A Shoe for Every Lifter: Whether you're a beginner learning proper form or a seasoned powerlifter chasing personal records, flat shoes offer universal benefits. Beginners will appreciate how they encourage proper mechanics without interference from soft, compressible soles. Competitive lifters, including powerlifters and strongman athletes, swear by them for their ability to optimize force transfer. Even bodybuilders, who focus on hypertrophy (increase in muscle size) rather than maximum strength, benefit from the improved stability these shoes provide. No matter what your training style is, the right footwear can help upgrade movement patterns and enhance performance.

Finding the Right Fit: The best part? Unlike specialized weightlifting shoes, which often come with a hefty price tag, canvas-based options are budget-friendly. Converse Chuck Taylors remain a go-to choice, but Vans and Keds offer similar advantages. Vans, in particular, provide a wider toe box for those who need extra room. While these shoes are versatile enough to wear outside the gym, frequent use can reduce grip and stability over time, so keeping a dedicated pair for training in your gym bag is a smart move. And if you're wondering whether running shoes can still work in the weight room - the answer is yes, but with some limitations. Soft-soled trainers won't sabotage your workout, but you might notice decreased stability during heavy lifts. If you stick with them, focus on maintaining strong core bracing and midfoot drive to compensate.

Final Takeaway: This isn't just another fitness trend - flat-soled shoes have been a staple for lifters for decades. The resurgence of minimalist and barefoot training only underscores their lasting appeal. Making the switch isn't about fashion, but function: better stability, improved muscle engagement, and more effective lifts. So, if you're still rocking the cushioned trainers while hitting the squat rack, it might be time to rethink your footwear. Lace up a pair of old-school canvas kicks and take your training to the next level!

Dr. Minhas is a professor at Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine in Philadelphia, PA. She is Past President of PPMA and is currently a board member of The Goldfarb Foundation. Zoreed Mukhtar is a third-year student enrolled at TUSPM.



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If you haven't made at least your *first quarterly payment*, please do so immediately to avoid suspension. The *second quarterly payment* is due September 1st. That means, at least half of your yearly dues should be paid at that time.

notice

Notice for Delaware Division Members:

Delaware Treasurer, Dr. Steven Schutzbank decided to *waive the \$30.00 Division dues* for all Delaware members for FY 25/26. *The adjustment is reflected on your invoice.*

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LIFETIME MEMBER SALUTE - JOE PASQUINO, DPM

Lifetime member, Dr. Joseph Pasquino was attending graduate school in Cleveland, Ohio, when he was first introduced to the world of podiatry.

While investigating the intricacies of obtaining an Earth Shoe franchise, Dr. Pasquino visited the Clinical Director at the Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine (now Kent State College of Podiatric Medicine). He wanted to understand the biomechanics and effects of the Earth Shoe's negative heel. Encouraged to seek a career in podiatry, he continued his path. He relocated to Southern California to pursue his plans of owning an Earth Shoe franchise.

Several years later, while running on the beach on the West Coast, he engaged with a podiatrist lecturing on running shoes and sports injuries. He was intrigued. After shadowing this podiatrist and further investigating a podiatrist career, Dr. Pasquino was confident that he had found podiatry to be a "good fit." He reconnected with the Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine (OCPM) Clinical Director, who enthusiastically encouraged him to enroll.

While at OCPM, he became involved in the Ohio Podiatric Medical Students' Association. This experience began a path of involvement that led to building a network that supported Dr. Pasquino's podiatric career, as Dr. Pasquino furthered his involvement in organizations serving in leadership roles. Ironically, he later served on the Board of Trustees at the school.

Dr. Pasquino completed his residency training at the James C. Gioffre Medical Center in Philadelphia, where he studied with and was mentored by some of PPMA's future leaders. Under the mentorship of Dr. John Mattiacci, his interest in leadership was further piqued. This vital connection resurfaced later in his career as he was introduced to the First National Guild for Healthcare Providers of the Lower Extremity (OPEIU, Guild 45).

Upon completing his residency, he relocated to Pittsburgh, where he opened a practice. Dr. Pasquino started his practice from scratch, getting off the ground with a line of credit. He possessed robust confidence in his endeavor. Like many podiatrists who started their own practice, he learned the business piece on the job. It took four years for his practice to begin being profitable.

The key to his success was getting involved in his community and networking. He slowly and purposely built a thriving practice by getting deeply involved in the local community, hospitals, and service organizations. In giving his time, he raised awareness of the benefits of podiatry within his community and grew his practice.

Dr. Pasquino recognized the need to both educate and inspire others.

Dr. Pasquino felt the need to invest in his people in-house by making continuing education a part of his practice culture,



ensuring continuing education was an employee benefit that his workforce could take advantage of. As a result of these practices and at his urging, many of his employees enjoyed successful careers in nursing, physical therapy, pharmacy, medicine, and veterinary medicine.

He introduced others to podiatry by lecturing at high schools and colleges, encouraging young students to shadow and observe him in practice and surgery. For decades, he participated as an instructor, moderator, and adjunct faculty member for several Podiatric and medical residency programs and hospitals.

As his practice grew, he renewed his thirst for advocacy and “giving back”. Dr. Pasquino initially served locally (Pittsburgh, PA), holding offices and positions in the PPMA, hospital boards, and service organizations. This eventually led to more prominent roles at the state and national levels (Past President of PPMA, Board Member of the William L Goldfarb Foundation). This allowed him to expand his professional influence and network, forming alliances with like-minded podiatrists and leaders nationwide.

He enjoyed participating in the early developmental stages of the Guild and the John Yurconic agency and being a longtime delegate, PAC, and PA coordinator of the APMA.

About ten years before his retirement, he sold his practice to an extensive, multi-specialty medical practice. He remained employed there, functioning as Department Chief and Board member.

This past year, Dr. Pasquino retired but remained active in podiatry and his community. Dr. Pasquino is an ambassador who recruits and mentors’ young Pennsylvanian podiatrists to serve the PPMA.

A volunteer in his local community, he volunteers his podiatric services twice a month for a free clinic. He serves on several Boards in the Pittsburgh community, including the Civic Light Opera, Medical Bureau, American Diabetes Association, and the Italian Sons and Daughters of America.

Dr. Pasquino enjoys traveling, dining, and spending precious time with his family.

In reflecting on his career choice, he responds with great enthusiasm: “Podiatry offers the opportunity to build great relationships. It allowed me to grow and hone professional and social skills while providing valuable service to individuals and communities. It allowed me to improve my life while learning humility and self-worth.” He adds that what he best likes about podiatry is that “I liked helping others.”

Dr. Pasquino lives in the Greater Pittsburgh area. He is an active consultant in the PPMA and the Goldfarb Foundation, and continues to serve on the Board of OPEIU, Guild 45.



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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



JANE PONTIOUS, DPM

I write to you today during what some may call "the dog days of summer," which are particularly hot for my four-legged friends. While we may complain about the humidity, it will not be long before our members will be packing their outerwear as they head to The Goldfarb Foundation's 53rd Annual Clinical Conference. Consider obtaining your CECHs early and check out the recent renovations and upgraded amenities at The Valley Forge Casino Resort. Reap the benefits of deep registration savings on CECHs when you put your membership benefits to use.

PPMA has been working hard for you during these long summer days, and excited to provide you with a positive update:

- Congress and the House have passed a bill that ensures we receive a 2.5% increase in Medicare Reimbursements beginning in 2026.
- Optum has reversed its decision to reclassify podiatrists, recognizing that podiatrists are independently licensed physicians who undergo specialized education and training and reaffirming the vital role podiatrists play in advancing clinical outcomes and patient care.
- Employment offers may be extended to those who pass their boards this fall, thanks to the efforts of The Goldfarb Foundation, which held its first Boards Review Course on July 26th. Volunteers from the board led participants in expanding their knowledge to prepare for the boards.
- PPMA has launched a Career Center on its website, representing an enhanced opportunity to advertise your job postings on a digital platform. This member benefit is provided at no charge and represents a value of \$399 per posting.
- Saving money on day-to-day purchases will be easier to access as PPMA's website will be accessible on your mobile phones, due to recent upgrades that benefit our members.
- The APMA met with Aetna, which resulted in discussions about Modifiers 25 and 59, in which members who have received denials may appeal this decision in an attempt to increase reimbursements, resulting in more money in our members' pockets.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me or the PPMA office.



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PPMA MEMBERS GIVE BACK

SPECIAL MEMBERS VOLUNTEER FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS SUMMER GAMES



It is always a pleasure to see our members unite to do good in the community.

This is the case with members who recently volunteered their time to support the athletes involved in The Special Olympics Pennsylvania Summer Games at Penn State University in State College, PA, June 5th - 6th.

Pictured Kneeling Front Row

Alexis Anderson, DPM; Michelle Sparks, DPM; Robyn Gansner, MD; Sydney Assalita; Larry Assalita, DPM

Pictured Kneeling Back Row

Bilal Louzati, DPM; Dan Olson, DPM; Tom Pokabla, DPM; Rick Tomassi, DPM; Gill Rice, CO/CPed; Chris Hess, DPM; John Susz, DPM; John Ziegler, DPM

ALLENTOWN RESCUE MISSION RECOGNIZES MEMBER FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS

Neal Kramer, DPM was recognized from the men's shelter for his years of service treating men in the areas of foot and ankle care, and in many cases providing the guests with complimentary shoes and socks that were much needed. The newly retired doctor still plans on giving back his time by providing education at the mission. At this time he is looking for a suitable replacement for the services he has provided as he has recently retired after serving patients for over 40 years.

"Treating the men at the Mission was the most gratifying experience of my career," says Kramer .



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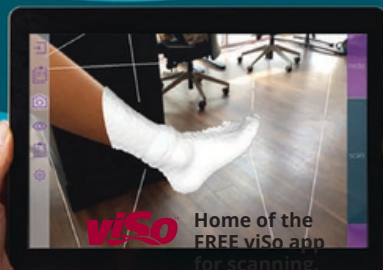
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Stay Tuned For 2026 Announcements

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VOLUNTEERING AT THE BOSTON MARATHON AS A FUTURE PODIATRIST

BY NEHA METGUD, TUSPM CLASS OF 2026

Although this wasn't my first trip to Boston, returning to the city for the 2025 Boston Marathon was unlike any visit I'd experienced before. I've seen the historic sites and visited Quincy Market, but being part of the marathon, especially as a volunteer in the medical tent, offered a whole new perspective on the heart and spirit of the city.

As someone passionate about running since high school, I've always looked up to and dreamed of being a part of the Boston Marathon. I've completed three half marathons and recently ran my first full marathon in Philadelphia this past fall. At TUSPM, I'm also involved in the running club, which has helped me stay connected to sport while balancing the demands of school. So, when the opportunity came to volunteer at one of the most elite marathons in the world, I knew I had to be a part of it.

The Boston Marathon is more than just a race. It's a powerful display of endurance, discipline, and unity. Every participant must qualify to run, making the field incredibly competitive and inspiring. Over 30,000 runners from all walks of life take on the 26.2-mile challenge, and witnessing their journey up close was nothing short of humbling.

Our team from the Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine (TUSPM) Sports Medicine Club had the privilege of volunteering at the Saint James Medical Tent just a few blocks from the finish line. This long-standing tradition is made possible by the dedication of our faculty, advisors, and students. This year, nine of us represented TUSPM, joining a collaborative medical team that included doctors, nurses, pharmacists, scribes, physical therapists, athletic trainers, and other medical students.

Podiatry had a unique floating role in the tent, which meant we stepped in wherever needed, treating everything from blistered, swollen feet and detached toenails to twisted ankles. One runner, incredibly, had run the entire marathon on a previously injured ankle. Our job was to ensure he was stable, safe, and supported in the post-race. The runners were genuinely grateful for the care they received, and it was a reminder of how deeply appreciated our work can be, even in brief interactions. The vibe throughout the day was electric. Boston comes alive during the marathon, with the whole city rallying behind the runners. There's a special magic in the air—one of resilience, achievement, and collective celebration. Whenever a runner entered our tent, they met with applause and congratulations. It's that kind of energy that makes the Boston Marathon so unique.



The presence of podiatric professionals at the event was strong. We worked alongside Dr. Jonathan Kaplan, Dr. Paul Heffernan, Dr. Tara Blitz, Dr. Robert Kelemen, Dr. Brandon Kelemen, and Dr. David Sipala. We were joined by several TUSPM alumni volunteering at other locations. Reconnecting with TUSPM alumni Dr. Grace Jurgiel and Dr. Rose Lipari, now Residents at Mount Auburn and Yale New Haven, respectively, was another highlight of the weekend.

The weather on race day was perfect—not too hot or cold, which helped minimize serious injuries. Still, we saw many blister-related cases and minor sports injuries. For any aspiring podiatrist or medical student, I can't recommend this experience enough. There's simply no classroom or clinic that can replicate a marathon medical tent's fast-paced, collaborative environment.

Volunteering at the Boston Marathon reminded me exactly why I chose podiatry. As a lifelong dancer and runner, I've always understood the importance of mobility—helping people get back on their feet to continue doing what they love. This experience reaffirmed my commitment to community service and to podiatry's unique, hands-on care.

The Boston Marathon was an entire weekend of learning, connecting, and celebrating the spirit of endurance, which I'll carry for years.

Neha Metgud is a podiatry student attending Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine. She is a APMSA Delegate, AAWP National Liason, and is scheduled to graduate in 2026.

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Immediate Opportunity: 50-year-old established part-time practice for sale near Temple Hospital. Podiatrist retiring for health reasons. Loyal patient base. Approximately 75 patients per week. A good mix of Medicare, Medicare Advantage, private insurance, cash, and Medicaid. 3 fully equipped treatment rooms, whirlpool, spa chair, office, kitchen, and storage room. Ground floor office with two apartments overhead, grossing 15K/year. All surgery and wound care are referred out. Terms negotiable. Please email nphillyfootdoc@gmail.com to learn more.

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Several assisted living facilities and skilled nursing centers are located in the North Hills of Pittsburgh. Seeking to introduce a new doctor to take over at the end of the year at the facilities and at the end of the third quarter at the medical center. Call Larry at 724-496-8838

EQUIPMENT FOR SALE IN PHILADELPHIA AREA

X-cel X-ray machines (2): Analog with long power cord and standard base; Digital with extra-long power cord and short base; **X-ray view boxes, dual film (3); Lead aprons with wall-mounted hangers (2); X-ray cassettes:**10x12 (8 Wolf, 7 standard); 8x10 (7 Wolf); **Darkroom:** Stainless steel dipping tank; X-ray film loading bin/cabinet with tilt open door and multiple slots (33"H x 22"W x15" D); **Safety lights**, wall mounted, one square, one round; **X-ray viewing lamp/light box ; X-ray holders (3); Jetta jacuzzi (multi-jet) whirlpool for feet and ankles (2)**, exceptional and unique system. Sonicator 705 therapeutic ultrasound. Prices are very reasonable and to be discussed based on your needs. Contact drmarukos@gmail.com

FREE ADVERTISING FOR MEMBERS

Contact our office to list a practice, equipment, or a job posting.

ADVOCACY



The **APMA Political Action Committee (APMAPAC)** is a nonprofit, bipartisan fundraising committee through which member podiatrists and students support federal candidates who champion podiatric medicine's issues before the U.S. Congress.

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A special **THANK YOU** to Jerry Gronborg, DPM, who has served as the PAC Representative for Pennsylvania on behalf of the APMA PAC for ten years.

Thank you for your service!



The **Pennsylvania Political Action Committee (PAPAC)** is a nonprofit, bipartisan fundraising committee through which podiatrists support candidates in the state of PA who champion podiatric medicine issues.



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2025 APMA DONATIONS TO DATE

Berks County
\$500

Bucks/Montgomery Counties
\$500

Central Division
\$100

Lehigh Valley
\$1,000

Philadelphia
\$1,000

South Central
\$500

Thank you to all divisions that have participated this year!

SOCIAL MEDIA

Follow us on social media for
the latest updates in real time



International Podiatry Day - October 8

How will you celebrate?

Consider a giveaway on your social media to
engage existing and new patients.

Falls Prevention Awareness Month - September

It's a time dedicated to raising awareness about
the risks of falls, especially among older adults,
and promoting strategies to prevent them.

We want to celebrate your successes!

SHARE your joys with us by "tagging"
PPMA in your posts!



Labor Day - September 1st

Consider updating your voicemail, email,
social media, and signage to reflect any
applicable closings and expectations.



A New Look

PPMA is slowly providing a new look and feel
to our members and the public.

Follow us on social media as we introduce
modern updates, including a mobile-friendly
website and more!

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Thank you for your contribution to PPMA!

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