

## HIGH HEELS AFFECT YOUR BODY

**Question:** I always hear that wearing high heels is bad for you. I am a 30 year old professional woman and they have not bothered me so far.

**Answer:** You may be one of the lucky ones that are able to wear high heels without ill effect. More likely, you have not worn them long enough and have a good chance of developing problems down the road.

High heels push your center of gravity forward, tipping your pelvis like you are pregnant. This increases the curvature in your low back and can easily cause low back pain.

Excess force is also placed on your knee, which is a common site of arthritis for women. One study found that knee joint pressure increased by 26% with high heels.

There is also a big increase in pressure on your forefoot ( the ball of your foot). A one inch heel causes 22% more pressure. Two inch heel causes 57% more pressure and a three inch heel causes 76% more pressure on the ball of your foot!

If the front of your shoe is narrow, this can also increase pressure at the forefoot, possibly leading to Morton's neuroma. This causes thickening of a nerve resulting in numbness and pain in your foot.

Calf muscles also become shorter and tighter. This causes more pulling on your heel, resulting in heel pain and Achilles' tendonitis.

I had a 60 year old patient that wore high heels all the time, even at home. If she wore flat shoes, she had too much pain in her calf and heel. She even vacuumed in high heels!

Tight-fitting shoes can cause bunions, which is bony growth along the inner big toe knuckle. Once this happens, you have pain every time your shoe rubs on your toe.

Hammer toes can develop when the smaller toes end up in a bent position. The muscles that flex your toes shorten and you are unable to straighten your toes. This then develops a corn on the top of the toe knuckle.

Ankle injuries are more common due to impaired balance. Who knows what type of injury you may have as a result of a fall?

If you must wear heels for appropriate dress, stay at 1 inch or less. Also do not use spiked heels, but keep the base wide and supportive.

Also buy your shoes at the end of the day when your feet are swollen. If the shoe pinches, do not buy it. It is not the shoe that breaks in, but your foot.

If you develop back, knee or foot pain, get out of your high heels. If this doesn't work, see your chiropractor.

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