Which Shoes Are Best to Consider for Gout Sufferers?

by NEWLIFEOUTLOOK TEAM

Footwear for Gout

Most people with gouty arthritis already know that what you put on your feet can have a large impact on your comfort level because gout typically affects the first metatarsophalangeal, a.k.a. the big toe. It is believed that this area is commonly affected because one of the most peripheral joints in the body, and so it tends to be a little cooler than other joints closer to the heart. Cooler temperature makes deposition of the monosodium urate crystals more likely because they don't dissolve as well. As the crystals build up they cause pain, inflammation and the formation of small, hard nodules known as tophi. (1) Without the proper footwear the pain in these already inflamed and in some cases degenerated, joints can become unbearable.

In addition to affecting the big toe, gout can impact the joints of the instep of the ankle as well as the knees. In all of these cases, the shoe that you wear will affect comfort and manage the intensity of flare-ups as you go about your daily activities. Unfortunately, many people with gout are either unaware that their choice of footwear has an impact on their gout, or realize it but are unsure which shoes will provide them the most comfort. This is important because the wrong shoes can trigger a gout attack.

Footwear Research

Researchers in New Zealand, according to a 2011 study, determined that people with gout commonly wear the wrong type of shoes, leading to increased pain and disability. This study revealed that 42% of individuals with gout made the wrong choices when it comes to footwear. (2) These included sandals, flip-flops, slippers and moccasins. In addition, high heels are also discouraged because of the extra stress they put on the joint of the big toe. In general, all of these footwear choices share several things in common that should be avoided: poor cushioning and a lack of support, stability and motion control. Another factor that can lead to increased pain is shoes that are too old because they typically show increased and uneven wear patterns.

So what is the right type of shoe for someone dealing with gout? The key seems to be sticking with shoes that have ample support, cushioning and motion control. Making sure that the shoe is wide enough is also imperative, as a shoe that is too narrow will put a lot of added stress on the forefoot, where many with gout experience their worst symptoms. Athletic sneakers and walking shoes are typically a safe bet. They come in a variety of widths and you can choose between varying degrees of support and cushioning to best fit your foot. You should go for the most cushioned insole available. In dress shoes, Oxfords are recommended by the experts. (2) You may end up spending a little more to find the proper shoes to keep your gout symptoms under control, but the investment will be worth it.