Women inflict more punishment on their feet than men, in part from improper footwear that can bring about unnecessary foot problems. Some of the problems result from high-heeled shoes (generally defined as pumps with heels of more than two inches). Doctors of podiatric medicine believe such heels are medically unsound, and attribute postural and even safety problems to their use.

Women face increased pressure, due to fashion and changing models, to wear shoes that are not always best for their feet. With more women working outside of the home, their feet are taking even more punishment, and the footwear that some feel obliged to wear in the workplace may be playing a role.

HIGH HEELS

Wearing high-heeled shoes will cause many foot problems over time. Podiatrists in general will not recommend wearing high-heeled shoes for long periods of time. They believe them to be biomechanically and orthopedically unsound. High-heeled shoes may contribute to knee and back problems, injuries and falls, shortening of the calf muscle, and an awkward and unnatural gait. Over time high-heeled shoes can cause enough changes in the foot to impair proper function of the foot. Most women admit that high heels make their feet hurt, but they tolerate the discomfort in order to look taller, stylish, and more professional.

If you are not willing give up very high-heeled shoes, there are some ways to relieve some of the aggressive effects. Limiting the time spent wearing them and alternating with a good quality Oxford-type shoe or flats for everyday use can be helpful. Arch supports can also be added to high heels to gain slightly more comfort. The key is wearing the right shoe for the right activity -- and that means varying heel height, determining what heel is most suitable. There are comfortable and attractive walking pumps for women for work and social activities. These pumps offer fashion with athletic shoe-derived construction with reinforced heels and wider toe room. They use space-age materials -- like long-lasting memory cushioning that acts as a shock absorber -- and the soles are more pliable.

PREGNANCY

Pregnant women need to observe good foot health to prevent pain and discomfort. With the body undergoing changes in acquiring a new weight-bearing stance, women should wear shoes with broad-based heels that provide support and absorb shock. The expectant mother often experiences increased swelling of her feet and ankles, which can aggravate existing foot conditions. Pregnancy also triggers release of hormones that increase laxity of ligaments, which can contribute to foot strain. If problems develop, she should see her podiatrist as soon as possible.

WOMEN OVER 65

As women age, they have more trouble with their feet than when they were younger. The fat pads on the bottom of the feet will atrophy or deteriorate during the aging process. Arthritis is also more prevalent as they age. Many foot deformities occur, such as bunions, hammertoes, neuromas, and pump bumps, all contributing to foot pain.

Dr. Honick has been trained specifically and extensively in the diagnosis and treatment of all manner of foot conditions. This training encompasses all of the intricately related systems and structures of the foot and lower leg, including neurological, circulatory, skin and the musculoskeletal system, which includes bones, joints, ligaments, tendons, muscles and nerves.