Does Shoe Shape Determine Foot Comfort? Yes and No

Rachel Ray’s ‘Foot Shape’ Segment Missing a Few Ingredients

Chicago, IL. On the January 9 segment of the Rachel Ray show, Rachel and her fashion/beauty expert, Gretchen Monahan, more commonly known as Gretta, spoke about picking dressy, fashionable shoes according to your foot shape. Gretta confidently told the audience that if they purchased the correct shoe shape: round, triangle or square, they will have ‘pain-free’ feet. If only it were that simple.

“Foot shape is determined by the length of ones toes, whether the longest toe is the second or big toe, you need to fit your shoes according to the longest toe,” says Dr. Marlene Reid, a podiatric surgeon from Chicago who heads a clinic in Naperville, IL. “Toe box shape is only one factor in shoe construction, and the way they affect the feet. Other factors like heel height, the cut of the toe box and the point at which the pointed-toe shoes curve are even more important factors!”

What about shoes with the dreaded pointed toe? Surely they are off limits, because they don’t adhere to any of the foot shapes. Not according to Dr. Reid: “A pointed shoe that has an extended (faux) toe can be quite comfortable for many women, no matter which toe is longer. Similarly, rounded toe shoes can often cut across the bunion area and be quite a problem,” Reid said.

Dr. David Yeager, a podiatrist from Dixon, IL., and president of the Illinois Podiatric Medical Association, offers these helpful hints when picking fashionable yet comfortable shoes: 1) use a padded insert to alleviate pressure on the ball of the foot; 2) always shop for shoes in the afternoon, because feet tend to swell during the day and buying shoes when feet are at their largest ensures a more comfortable fit; 3) try slightly lower heels to reduce pressure; and 4) vary heel height day to day to help prevent contraction of the Achilles tendon.

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About the Illinois Podiatric Medical Association (IPMA) The IPMA is based in Chicago and represents over 700 podiatrists throughout the state of Illinois. For more information about podiatric medicine, visit the Illinois Podiatric Medical Association’s website at www.ipma.net, Facebook page at www.facebook.com/IllinoisPodiatricMedicalAssociation or call 312.427.5810.