

'Killer Heels – please use these weapons of fashion in moderation'

A pair of pointy 4 inch heels may make that outfit perfect but by seeking this foot style perfection could be costly to your health. Studies have shown that those Killer heels can take their toll on your spine, hips, knees, ankles and feet, whilst altering your posture and gait.

In an optimal functioning body, the neuro-musculoskeletal system hangs in dynamic equilibrium, with each part balancing the other. When a woman wears high heels a new dynamic equilibrium occurs, if one body part becomes fixed the whole system must compensate with altered movement patterns. The body will attempt to compensate for the off-kilter balance heels cause by flexing or forward bending the hips and spine putting excess pressure on your lower back.

As the heel height increases so does the pressure on the forefoot or ball of the foot. This increased weight on the toes causes the body to tilt forward and to compensate you lean backwards and overarch your back creating a posture that can strain your knees, hips and lower back.

- 3 inch heel 76% increase
- 2 inch heel 57% increase
- 1 inch heel 22% increase

When standing barefoot the anterior angle, or pelvic tilt is 25 degrees and this increases as the height of the heel increases to 60 degrees with 3 inch heels.

If you happen to wear high heels regularly the pelvis learns to stay tilted forward the lower back will sway in and the upper back will arch back which can lead to an exaggerated lumbar curve. From heels to hips to upper back this can be the cause of pain and dysfunction throughout the body and other problems associated with posture.

Tips:

- Vary your shoe choice during the day – wear comfortable shoes such as trainers for commuting to and from work that allow your body to move naturally when walking allowing your feet, legs, hips and back to stretch
- Wear the right sized shoe to ensure that your feet don't slide forward any more than necessary



- Try and set your heel limit to 2 inches and avoid pointed toes, play with your style and experiment with different shoes.
- Wear these weapons of fashion in moderation on days that require limited walking or standing

If you are interested in finding out more information on how you can improve your spinal health, posture and overall wellbeing please contact your local [United Chiropractic Association](#) Chiropractor.

Research

“The Effect of Walking in High-and Low-Heeled Shoes on Erector Spinae Activity and Pelvis Kinematics During Gait” Mika, Anna, Lukasz Oleksy, Piotr Mika, Anna Marchewka, and Brian Clark. [Am J Phys Med Rehabil](#). 2012 May;91(5):425-34. doi: 10.1097/PHM.0b013e3182465e57.

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“Biomechanical Effects of Wearing High-heeled Shoes” Lee, Chang-Min, Eun-Hee Jeong, and Andris Freivalds. *International Journal of Industrial Ergonomics*. 28.6 (2001): 321-326. Web. 4 Mar. 2012.

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