

## **WANT TO GET INTO SHAPE?** **GET THE PROPER SHOE WEAR**

With the return of the warmer weather, many will probably want to return to outdoor activities. For some people, it will mean getting back to jogging or going for a walk in the neighbourhood. Whatever the choice of the activity, the shoes worn are of utmost importance. Many people consult physiotherapists because they have developed pain in their feet, ankles, knees, hips or even low back due to poor shoe wear. Shoes that are worn out or inappropriate for a particular foot can create, over time, problems in the lower limb or back. The normal duration of a shoe, especially for sports, is about 1000 km or one year. If a shoe is torn or its sole is worn out, it cannot offer proper support or adaptability to different terrains. If the shoe cannot do the work, there will be more strain on the foot or leg.

A good shoe must first be comfortable. Depending of the type of foot one has, certain brand names will be more suitable than others. If you have a flat foot, also known as a “pronated foot”, the inner arch of the foot will be very small or non existent. A pronated foot is very mobile so it absorbs a lot of energy during walking but it acts as a poor lever during push off. More effort will be required to transfer weight forward. This can lead to overuse syndromes such as tendonitis or hallux valgus of the big toe. On the other hand, if someone has a high inner arch, or a “cavus foot”, their foot will be more rigid, so less mobile. This type of foot may lead to stress fractures or tendonitis in the lower leg as well as plantar fasciitis. These two types of feet will require different shoe wear to enhance proper function. Some feet will also require the use of orthotics for adequate support.

You can get advice on proper shoe wear and orthotics from physiotherapists. If you already have a foot or leg condition, a detailed assessment of your walking pattern as well as the mobility and strength of your leg will be evaluated. You will then be taught a specific exercise program in order to regain optimal function.