The futile search for the perfect shoe fit

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The Futile Search for the Perfect Shoe Fit

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Abstract

The common assumption that perfect or correct shoe fit can be expected if the shoe and fitting are proper is untenable for a variety of reasons. For instance, no two feet of a pair are exactly alike, inevitably resulting in some degree of shoe misfit. Also, the foot assumes four different sizes and shapes under different conditions: at rest, on weight-bearing, in gait, and under thermal variations, yet all must comply to a shoe of only one size and shape.

The complexities of shoe fit are further exacerbated by other obstacles. These include the prevailing design of shoe lasts, the absence of uniformity of shoe sizes, the limited training and skills of most shoe salespeople and fitters, the subjective determination of shoe fit by customer and fitter alike, and the role of footwear fashions.

Hence shoe fit at best must be a compromise with the ideal. Nevertheless, improvements are possible, as suggested in this paper.

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