

WOMEN'S HEALTH TRENDS

Women And High Heels: A Love/Hate Relationship

(NAPSA)—Over 500 women were interviewed to determine how they feel about high heels and just how high heels make their feet feel. According to the survey, by the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) almost three-quarters of the women wear high heel shoes on a regular basis, while 39 percent admit to wearing high heels every day!

Podiatrists, doctors who specialize in caring for the feet and ankles, see no value in wearing high heels, which are generally defined as pumps with heels of more than two inches. They find the shoes contribute to knee and back problems, injuries during falls, shortened calf muscles, and awkward gait.

But that doesn't seem to stop the 62 percent of women surveyed who wear heels that are at least 2 inches high. A whopping 83 percent wear high heels for fashion or style and another 72 percent said they needed to wear the shoes to complete their wardrobe! About half of the women also confessed that they wear the high heels to look sexier and to enhance the shape of their legs.

Not surprisingly, foot pain was common among the interviewees. Physical problems that are often caused by wearing high heels, including blisters, pain in the ball of the foot, corns and calluses, heel pain, and pain in the arches of the feet, were reported. Even so, almost half of the women said they just grin and bear it. Forty-two percent of the women said they wear high heels, despite the pain, for the sake of style or to look more attractive. Most disconcerting of all, is that only 15 per-



HIGH HEELS are right up there in popularity: 62 percent of women surveyed wear heels that are at least two inches high.

cent of the women who experience foot pain said they seek professional care from a podiatrist or other health care provider.

Women who find themselves wrapped up in this love/hate relationship with high heels need to pay more attention to foot care. There are ways to relieve some of the abusive effects that high heels cause. The American Podiatric Medical Association suggests limiting the amount of time spent wearing high heels. Try alternating with good-quality athletic shoes or flats for part of the day. High heels that are too tight can intensify the abuse; it's good advice to buy shoes in the afternoon since feet swell and tend to increase in size later in the day. For tips on selecting proper footwear or more information on foot care, visit the APMA on the Web at www.apma.org or call 1-800-FOOTCARE to request a free brochure.