

## **Integrated Approach and Professional Fitting Protocol\***

### **A Critical Aspect of Preventive Foot Health**

***To get the best fit when buying new shoes and to ensure maximum foot protection and comfort:***

1. Start with a professional foot assessment, gait analysis and sizing determination. Ideally, your foot health specialist should measure your feet with a Brannock device or another equivalent measurement tool and do so each time you buy new footwear, since your foot shape, size and any foot conditions you may have change over time, and because different styles are sized differently.
2. Select padded socks made for the activity in which you will be engaging – for example, padded socks for walking, running, hiking or casual wear. Wear these padded socks when you are measured and fitted for new shoes.
3. Select shoes that are appropriate for the activity in which you will be engaging. Shoes should be roomy without letting your feet slide around. Feel inside the shoes to make sure there are no rough seams or raised areas that can create pressure points or rub the skin. The toe area should be rounded, broad, deep and shaped like your feet (no pointy toes). If the shoes have laces, the tongue should be cushioned. For most of us, one foot is larger than the other, so choose shoes that fit the larger and wider foot.
4. Try on your shoes while wearing your padded socks. If you are using inserts or orthotics, place them inside the shoes first. If you use a full length insert or custom orthotic, remove the foot beds that come with the shoes before placing the inserts or orthotics into the shoes.
5. Check the heel and ball width and toe room by pressing your thumb or finger on the front and sides of the shoe.
6. Buy shoes based on the way they feel, not by size:
  - You should be able to move your toes comfortably
  - There should be a space the width of your thumb nail between your longest toe and the end of the shoe.
  - The heel should fit comfortably, with minimal slippage.
  - The ball of your foot should fit comfortably into the widest part of the shoe without feeling pinched or tight.
  - You should not feel any rubbing or chafing. Remember that your feet tend to get larger from the exertion of daily activities, so make sure there is sufficient room for them to expand and still go through their full range of motion. If possible, shop for shoes near the end of the day, when your feet are larger.
7. If a doctor or foot specialist provided a prescription for shoes, always follow his or her requirements and confirm the proper fit.
8. Remember: Your padded socks, shoes and any inserts or orthotics should feel comfortable from the very first day. This ensures that the integrated fitting “system” is working properly and providing maximum foot protection and comfort.

\* Adapted from the Institute for Preventive Foot Health guidelines, “Integrated Approach to Selecting Padded Socks and Shoes that Fit” at [www.ipfh.org](http://www.ipfh.org)