

STYLE | BEAUTY

Love High Heels? Early Minimally-Invasive Keyhole Surgery May Be the Solution to Foot Problem



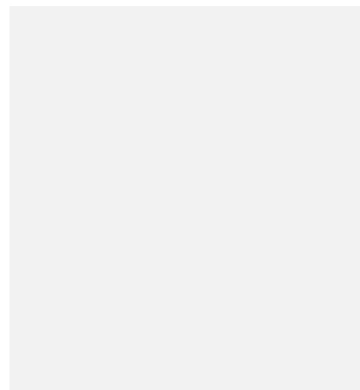
By Vanessa Chia
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Tatler+

Want to dance the night away in your favourite stilettos and in absolute comfort? Yes, you can—and still avoid painful bunions

You can't live without your Choos, Louboutins and Blahniks, and we don't blame you. The right pair of high-heels make us stand tall, give us a bolstered sense of confidence. make our walk



more attractive and most importantly, make heads turn. Plus, there really is nothing more exquisite than a beautiful pair of heels.

But what if your high-heel shoes and stilettos are causing you pain each time you take a step? Everyone wants to look good, but does it have to come with a painful price?

The good news: It doesn't have to, says Dr Kevin Koo, director and consultant orthopaedic surgeon at The Bone & Joint Centre, Mount Elizabeth Medical Centre.

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Caring For Your Feet First

According to Dr Koo, long-term use of high-heels, pointed footwear and ill-fitting shoes can lead to problems like bunions, corns and calluses along with an increased risk of ankle sprains, worsening of existing conditions like ingrown toenails and hammer toes, Achilles tendinitis and even knee and back pains.

Among these, bunions, that red painful bump at the joint of your big toe, are the most common.

“A bunion is a deformity of the big toe where it drifts or deviates outwards and towards the second toe,” says Dr Koo. “As a result, a bony bump forms at the base of the big toe, which over time, can become inflamed and painful.”

And if left untreated, bunions can make it difficult to wear shoes, affect your mobility and even result in “overlapping” of your other toes.

So what causes bunions? Besides shoes with narrow fronts and high-heels, Dr Koo shares that family history can also increase your chances.

Happy Feet

And while there are non-surgical ways to treat your bunion problem, such as wearing shoes with a broader front, taking anti-inflammatory medications or wearing toe splints, Dr Koo does add that the problem with bunions is that once they occur, they have the potential to get more severe with time.

And when that happens, surgery may be the only option, especially if symptoms persist in spite of conservative measures. Traditionally, surgeons would have to make a surgical incision between 5-8cm in length to correct the bunion with a surgical saw. While effective, this procedure is painful and could result in keloids or wound infections during recovery.

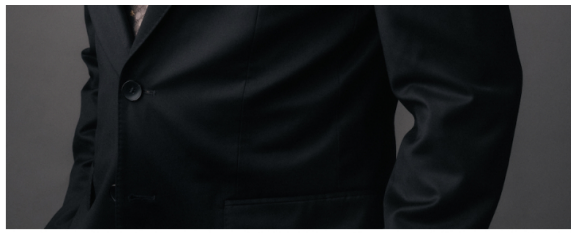
Fortunately, there is an innovative, minimally-invasive “keyhole” technique to correct your bunions now. This updated surgical breakthrough surgery is able to correct bunions via a few small incisions, each between 2-4mm in length. However, Dr Koo does add that this less invasive surgical option is only suitable for mild to moderate bunions. So early diagnosis and treatment will help you benefit from this technique.

If The Shoe Fits

While we love our shoes, we should also pay more attention to our feet as Dr Koo says that our feet’s health is vital to our wellbeing. “Our feet perform essential functions such as supporting our body weight, providing balance, shock absorption and locomotion, like walking, running and jumping. Ultimately, having healthy feet allows you to have quality of life, productive work and regular physical activity.”

To ensure that each step you take is a comfortable one, Dr Koo shares these tips:





1. Show off your toes. Switch to sandal heels as they are less constricting.
2. Get better support. Opt for heels with an ankle strap for better balance.
3. Go for a thicker heel. Stilettos often cause pain to the heels of your feet as they place a lot of stress and weight on the shoe's thin heel. Shoes with thicker heels or wedge heels help reduce the pain and discomfort—these distribute your body weight more evenly and are a good option if you'll be spending a long day on your feet.
4. Consider the height and slope. Switch to platform shoes to reduce the angle or extent of slant of the shoes, which put less stress on your toes.
5. Go for real leather. Choose shoes that are made with genuine leather instead of polyurethane leather—genuine leather is softer, won't feel as constricting on your toes and will fit the shape of your feet better.

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