

# Do footwear styles cause falls or increase falls risk in older women? A systematic review

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## Background

Footwear has been implicated as a risk factor in falls, however the evidence that supports this claim is precarious and confusing.

## Method

363 papers were extracted from a search of Ovid Medline, PubMed, Scopus and Web of Science. 65 papers were excluded as per the inclusion and exclusion criteria such as no falls outcome and occupational or surgical footwear described. A total of 10 papers were included in the review. None of these articles reported the amount time that different footwear styles were worn (exposure) and the rates of falls reported during this time.

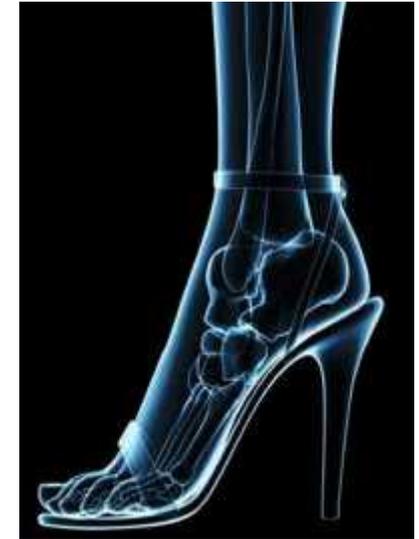
## Results

High heeled footwear is reportedly not the most common type of footwear worn by elderly ladies with one study reporting only 2% of elderly women wearing high heeled footwear when they fell. High heels may still be perceived as riskier footwear in regard to falls however they are not as significant in this population group due to lesser wear time and therefore likelihood of fall.

Slippers were the most common footwear worn at the time of fall and most frequently worn at the time of an injurious fall. However wear exposure time was not reported.

Lace up/Oxford footwear was associated with the lowest risk of falling, with risk of falling higher for all other footwear types in comparison. However there were methodological issues with these studies.

Boots and sandals were difficult to define and had minimal data in regard to falls.



## Conclusion

There is no evidence available supporting any relationship between footwear styles and rates of falls in older adults. Given falls guidelines around the world are based on these studies, more research is needed to make appropriate clinical recommendations on footwear in relation to falls.

