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For Feet's Sake

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For Feet's Sake

A BEAUTIFUL hostess was once criticized for wearing low-heeled shoes with an elaborate afternoon gown. She replied: "I prefer that my face should express the comfort that my feet feel, rather than that my feet should look fashionable. Between lines in my face and lack of style in my heels, I choose the latter."

The foot, encased in a dancing slipper or in low-heeled sport shoes, is an interesting and important structure. It is composed of 26 bones and a network of ligaments, nerves, tendons and muscles, veins and arteries. The nerves in the foot are terminal branches of the sciatic nerve, the largest nerve in the body. It is not difficult to understand why even the slightest pressure on the feet can cause such intense pain, and in turn why this pain traces aging lines on a face that otherwise might be Youthfully smooth.

Age is first revealed in the feet. All too soon, dancing, hiking and other pleasures and healthful exercise are abandoned for an easy-chair and carpet slippers. This is particularly true of women, because of the foolish styles of their footwear.

Perverse conceptions as to the requirements of a beautiful foot have been broadcast everywhere. The inconceivably silly idea that small feet are an enviable possession has done vast harm. In shoes that are too small, feet are enclosed in airtight cases and compelled to assume the form of the shoe. The toes are forced out of shape, and even the body structure of the foot itself is often changed, all because of the desire to conform to the style of the period. All this is hard on the spine and nerves. It uses up vitality, and discourages the exercise which rebuilds vitality. It spoils the shape of the calf, and results in an ungraceful walk.

It is impossible to walk without restriction, if you wear shoes that will imprison and bind your feet. For thousands of generations feet have furnished the only mode of traveling. Today their proper use will materially add to the bodily strength and vitality which makes for happiness and personal effectiveness.

To keep the foot healthy and beautiful, it should be bathed frequently, because shoes and stockings prevent the evaporation of the perspiration the skin constantly exudes. If the skin seems sensitive, salt-water application, alternately hot and cold, will help.

After bathing the feet should be carefully wiped. No moisture should be left between the toes. A massage with olive oil or cold cream is excellent, especially in winter when the skin is inclined to become dry and chapped.

Large stockings also produce bad results. It is to be remembered that high heels are disastrous to arches and that elaborate shoes attract attention to an ill-formed as well as to a beautiful foot. But if the demands of style seem of importance to you and high heels seem required on certain occasions, that is no reason for adopting them for everyday wear.

Undeniably, high heels worn constantly result in the permanent shortening of the muscles and tendons of the calf so that, when one then puts on low-heeled shoes for sport or long walks, very painful sprains develop. Frequent changing from low to high heels keeps the foot in much better condition and is a sensible compromise between the demands of polite society and those of health and athletics. The well-dressed sportswoman can wear either high-heeled or heelless shoes with equal grace.

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