

## No glass slippers: What to look for in footwear



Photo courtesy of Aetrex

### **Go back to “If the shoe fits”**

Put your best foot forward—and improve stability and gait—with [the right footwear](#).

The right shoes can make all the difference for people with MS. Below are nine expert tips, as part of the "[If the shoe fits](#)," article on finding the right footwear.

1. **Light tread.** A heavy tread creates more friction on the ground, and the foot could drag.
2. **Light weight.** A heavy shoe takes more energy and effort to lift when walking.
3. **Secure fastening.** String or elastic shoelaces and Velcro adjust for a more custom fit than a slip-on.
4. **Broad base.** If the heel is too narrow, the shoe is tippy. A wide heel, however, stabilizes the foot while standing.
5. **Extra depth.** Built slightly higher all around, added-depth shoes provide support and space for a better fit—and for orthotics or a brace.
6. **Firm heel counter.** Press on the shoe at the bottom of the heel—it should feel solid, not soft. Skip loose sling-backs, flip-flops and clogs.
7. **Correct size.** A too-small shoe restricts blood flow (problematic if you already have poor leg circulation), but if it's too large, the foot isn't stable. The best fit gives ½ to 1 inch of toe room while standing, and no heel slippage.
8. **Low heel.** One that's only 1.5 inches or less, and 2 inches max, helps with balance. Plus, a low heel enables your foot to roll, not slap, as you walk.
9. **Sturdy shank.** Made of steel or plastic, the shank runs from heel to forefoot under the sole, and reduces side-to-side foot motion.

*Sources: Dr. Terrence Philbin and Monica Wainio*