Strategies for Minimizing Lupus Foot Pain

by BARBARA LEECH

Treading Lightly Around the Wolf

I used to have a shoe problem different than the one I have today. My closet was once filled with the latest variety of three-inch heels, from platforms to wedges to stilettos. Now, thanks to lupus, it is filled with flip-flops and flats.

I still have a couple pairs of high-heeled beauties collecting dust on the top shelf, but between joint pain and inflammation, it is a rare occasion that I slip them on. I am Cinderella and I have been robbed of my glass slippers.

Lupus heel pain is one of the smaller problems brought about by the condition, yet for many women, including myself, shoes used to be a very important thing.

They were a part of how I presented myself to the world. They made me feel elegant, confident and pretty.

Now, as I battle with all that lupus has taken from me, I find this little passion of mine is one of the things that has been stolen. The little girl in me still wants to slip pretty shoes on and feel special, but instead I feel pain.

Select Carefully to Minimize Lupus Foot Pain

If you are like me, even shoes that seem like they will be safe to wear can increase foot pain, cause blisters or increase swelling. Here are a few tips:

Avoid Heels (Except for Special Occasions)

As much as I love them, from how they look to how they make me feel, high heels typically will cause pain and swelling in my ankles as well as the tops of my feet.

If it is a very special occasion (like for my daughter's wedding), I opt for heels that have less enclosure around the top of the foot and a toe area that is not very pointed. For me the more pressure the greater the swelling.

I also give my feet a break when nobody is looking by slipping the shoes off for a while. This is risky though if your swelling is severe, since you may not get your foot back inside the shoe. But I find that getting my ankle out of the bent high-heeled position for a bit does wonders.

Cushion the Weight

I find that the longer I am standing, the more I feel the weight in my feet. I have cushioned insoles inside my sneakers and I use flip-flops that are not too thin or flat against the ground. Even my slippers are Uggs and have a fuzzy cushion between me and the floor.

Extra Wide Options

My feet are not naturally wide, but sometimes lupus makes me feel a bit like an elephant by the end of the day. By the time I have done all the things on my children's schedules, completed my day's work, attended doctor's appointments and bought groceries, my feet look like something out of a horror film and my shoes are stretched to the max.

So, I keep wide shoes in my car, which allows me to finish my day without resorting to running around barefoot.

Warming Your Reynaud's

I have terrible problems with my feet in cold weather. I have wool socks and warm boots that I sometimes wear in my house, just because the floor can turn my feet purple and cause terrible, burning pain.

When lupus affects your feet, your whole day can be more difficult. It is something other people probably don't even think about. Be ready for the wolf. Choose shoes for comfort over fashion and keep extra-comfortable shoes handy for those rough, painful moments.