

Putting your foot in it: but shoes can make a difference

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Researchers at the University of Melbourne have proven that a modified shoe can reduce knee load in people with knee osteoarthritis.

The research has been carried out by Professor Kim Bennell and her team at the Centre for Health, Exercise and Sports Medicine at the University of Melbourne and supported by an Australian Research Council grant with ASICS, an athletic footwear company as the industry partner. Results showed that a specially-designed shoe can reduce knee load during walking, compared to traditionally-designed athletic shoes.

This was seen in healthy people, in overweight people who are more at risk of developing osteoarthritis and in people with established painful <u>knee osteoarthritis</u>.

Reducing knee pressure is important as higher knee loads are associated with a greater likelihood of developing osteoarthritis as well as faster progression of the disease in people who already have osteoarthritis.

Knee osteoarthritis is the most common chronic musculoskeletal health condition currently affecting adult Australians, with 1.6 million Australians affected by the disease.

The condition causes pain, <u>physical disability</u>, alterations to the way people move and <u>psychological distress</u>. However, even though there is no cure for the disease, things can improve with the right management.



The University of Melbourne researchers are currently seeking volunteers for a range of research projects designed to improve outcomes for people with hip or knee osteoarthritis. These projects include investigations of footwear, pain <u>coping skills</u> training, exercise, physiotherapy as well as <u>MRI scans</u> to see how <u>brain function</u> changes with arthritis and certain treatments.

Professor Bennell said people shouldn't suffer in silence. "Aids such as modified shoes, can reduce the 'load' on the inside of the knee and may slow progression of osteoarthritis. Research is happening right now that can help us find even better treatments," she said.

Provided by University of Melbourne

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