

## By LUCY ELKINS

# They promise to help treat everything from diabetes to poor circulation. But to the new generation of health-conscious us, to the hve?

**HEN** Hollywood actresses Maggie Gyllenhaal and Kirsten Dunst stepped out in Worishofer sandals—said to help with bunions—they caused something of a stir. After all, corrective shoes are meant to be clumpy and unattractive. In fact, Worishofer is one of a growing number of trendy footwear ranges with apparent health benefits. But are they any good? Podiatrist Michael Abraham, of the London Nail Laser Clinic, gives his verdict.

### SCHOLL ORTHAHEEL MIAMI

**440.scholl.co.uk**  
**MAY HELP:** Painful heels, knees and lower back  
**THESE** look a bit like flip-flops with a strap. The key to this design is on the insole—one side of the shoe is higher. This is to help prevent the foot rolling over and in unattractive shoes, hard surfaces or wear and tear can make the problem worse, resulting in fallen arches. An unsupported arch can also mean the foot and leg are no longer in proper alignment, causing aches and pains.  
**EXPERT COMMENT:** Fallen arches can cause knock-on problems as every time you take a step one side of the foot slides inward more than normal, putting excess tension on the thigh, leg and lower back. A lot of leg pain is due to fallen arches. These shoes will stop the foot rotating inward so much. They also have a solid strap which means the feet won't move around as with conventional flip-flops. However, some people just never get used to flip-flops of any kind.

8/10

### KORLY

**£38.cosyfeet.com, 01458 447275**  
**MAY HELP:** Swollen feet  
**THESE** fabric shoes are super-wide—fitting up to EEEE— and have an extra extension piece because they're made without internal seams, which means there's less risk of chafing thin skin on the feet.  
**EXPERT COMMENT:** These will be good for people with swollen feet, such as those with arthritis. The lack of seams will also mean they're suitable for diabetics whose skin is often thin on the feet.  
The fabric won't offer much protection from bumps and cuts, which is important for diabetics as nerve damage means reduced sensation and problems with wound healing—having solid protection around their feet is important. Although these are very roomy they might be too wide for some; the foot will slip around, which could cause rather than solve problems.

6/10

### SKECHERS SHAPE-UPS

**£89.99.fitnessfootwear.com**  
**MAY HELP:** Plantar fasciitis, aching joints  
**THESE** shoes are designed to simulate walking on soft ground, said to ease the stress on joints, promote correct posture and strengthen the leg, back, back and abdominal muscles. They have a soft cushioning between the sole and the footbed—the part of the shoe the foot rests on—to provide extra cushioning. The **FLIT FLIPS** with a difference, these towards the heel, to help produce a rolling motion from heel to toe.  
**EXPERT COMMENT:** Every time you take a step you put a strain of three to four times your body weight on your joints—more if you're doing high impact exercise. These

thick soles will reduce that impact, helping with aching legs or knee pain, for example. They may also help with plantar fasciitis—the band of tissue running from the heel along the sole to the toes becomes inflamed. This can occur as a result of repeated tension from flat feet, the way you walk, even trauma. These shoes, in effect, work like an insole, supporting the foot.

10/10

### WORISHOFER SHOES

**£55.lovehoeshoes.com, 0161 975 5380**  
**MAY HELP:** Bunions, aching joints  
**SHOES** designed by a German podiatrist to support the foot, reduce strain on the joints and back. The footbed is lined with leather to allow the feet to breathe. There is cork between the footbed and the sole to absorb shock and reduce impact on the joints. The adjustable strap means they can be adapted to pretty much any width of foot fit, hence their apparent suitability for bunions.  
**EXPERT COMMENT:** If you have a bunion then your big toe joint sticks out from the side. If you have a strap across, you can adjust it to fit. But you will still be pushing your feet as much as you might to make them fit snugly, which can put pressure on the bunion. So these might suit people with slight bunions. They could potentially aggravate more pronounced bunion joints. The thicker heel provides shock absorption so may help reduce strain on the back and legs.

5/10

### BEECH SANDALS

**£29.beechsandals.co.uk**  
**MAY HELP:** Bunions, Morton's neuroma, plantar fasciitis, aches  
**FLIT FLIPS** with a difference, these have four toe-separators—by spread-



PICTURE: HEIKO HOFFMANN

muscles work harder. This apparently boosts circulation—useful for diabetics. The increased work on the muscles that happens as you walk in Tonewalkers also helps to reduce blood pressure, the makers claim.

**EXPERT COMMENT:** I don't think these would be good for diabetics, as there is little protection for the feet. They may help with circulation, as the calf muscles would be working harder than normal. But I am also concerned these will cause a higer alteration to the normal gait, which can cause aches and pains. They're also quite clumpy and people might fall. I can't see how these would help reduce blood pressure.

2/10

### INGA

**£65.lovehoeshoes.com, 0161 975 5380**  
**MAY HELP:** Back ache and tired feet  
**THESE** clumpy version of the clog, these have a wooden insole that supports the arch and reduces pressure in the legs and feet, according to the maker. The sole is slightly curved, creating a rocking motion which is said to encourage a smoother gait, improving posture and preventing back pain.  
**EXPERT COMMENT:** The contours and design of the sole should support the arch of the foot and help reduce aches and pains that occur as a result of flat feet. The thick sole will act as a shock absorber and the angle encourages a better gait, helping reduce tension on the joints. It also has a larger box area for the toe that would reduce the risk of compression.

9/10

### CROCS FOR DIABETIC FEET

**£29.95.cosyfeet.com, 01458 449035**  
**MAY HELP:** Diabetics  
**THE** Crocs Rx Cloud has been specifically designed for diabetics. The soft foam insole of a lightweight resin-like material, provides underfoot cushioning, while the sock allows for use of a heavy sock without creating any tightness or pressure points on the foot. The padded toe cap and elevated heel rim also protect the foot.  
**EXPERT COMMENT:** These are more enclosed than a normal Croc and have lots of space at the front for the toes. That makes them ideal for diabetics, who tend to have thin skin on their feet and often have a lack of sensation in their feet which means they can unwittingly hurt themselves. The only down-side is some people may find their feet slip around slightly in these because they are so roomy—although this could be helped by wearing socks.

7/10

Sensible: Maggie Gyllenhaal wearing Worishofer sandals

ing the toes and realigning the feet they are said to help bunions, plantar fasciitis, joint pain and poor posture.

**EXPERT COMMENT:** I sometimes recommend these to patients with Morton's neuroma, a swelling on the nerves between the toes which occurs often as a result of wearing narrow shoes that squeeze toes together. The dividers keep the toes apart, so reduce the swelling. They would be good for bunions, as there is nothing to press on the big toe joint and they have the extra straps to help them hold the foot. They offer some support, too.



8/10

### TONEWALKER

**£49.lovehoeshoes.com, 0161 975 5380**  
**MAY HELP:** Poor circulation and to strengthen muscles  
**THESE** make the wearer work harder with every step. The unusual platform puts you on a slight incline, forcing you to correct your balance; this is said to encourage the pumping action in the deep veins and make



8/10

### DID YOU KNOW?

Teaspoon sizes vary from 2.5 to 7.3ml which means you or your child could be taking two to three times more medication than advised, so always use the spoon provided

### FITFLOPS

**£45.fitnessfoot.com**  
**MAY HELP:** Poor back pain, aching joints  
**THESE** may look like ordinary flip-flops, but each part of the sole is slightly different in density—to maintain normal balance, legs have to work harder than normal. The manufacturer claims your legs work 16 per cent harder than in normal shoes, so so long as you walk. They have a padded sole, which gives about 22 per cent more shock absorbency than regular shoes.  
**EXPERT COMMENT:** These have a nice thick heel which will help reduce the impact on joints and may help with lower back pain in some. But if your aches and pains result from mechanical damage in your foot, for example, then these are unlikely to do anything to help ease your pain. The thick sole will push around the top mean this is more supportive and a better option than a normal flip-flop and may help with aches and pains for some.

5/10