FOOTWEAR GUIDELINES AND SUPPORTS

1. CHECK
- Check safety shoe requirements of role (i.e. steel-toed, anti-slip, etc.) or department dress code
- Western Safety Footwear Guideline
- Benefit eligibility and collective agreement for shoe or orthotics allowance
- Check your department or employee group website for eligible discounts for Western employees (show employee ID badge)

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF FIT
Tips to choose a good quality shoe:
- Go to a proper (safety) shoe store
- Get fit and measured EVERY time on both feet
- Try on more than one option
- Buy shoes later in the afternoon when feet are likely to be swollen and their largest size
- Consider sock choice
  - Socks that are too tight may also cramp toes
  - Socks that are too large may cause blisters

3. INSPECT
- Inspect footwear regularly for signs of wear and tear
- Red flags to watch out for during an inspection:
  - Separating soles
  - Torn insulation
  - Tears, holes, or cracks
  - Worn treads
  - External damage
  - Internal damage - weakens toe caps
- Look at the wear patterns of your insoles and shoes - take the insole out to inspect
- Replace every year

4. FOOT CONDITIONS AND ORTHOTICS
Appropriate footwear selection plays a crucial role in the prevention and treatment of foot conditions. Some individuals may also benefit from the use of orthotics. General foot conditions and concerns include:
- Plantar fasciitis, bunions or ankle sprains
- Fallen arches or flat feet
- Osteoarthritis (OA) / Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)
- Pain in the forefoot, Achilles, heel or low back
- Patellofemoral pain syndrome (PFPS) or Iliotibial Band Friction Syndrome (ITBFS) .... and others

RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS
For more information on safety shoe selection please refer to:
- CCOHS: Foot Comfort and Safety at Work
- Orthotics and Workplace Footwear - Pedorthic Association of Canada

Disclaimer: This handout is provided as educational information and does not substitute for the consultation, diagnosis, or treatment from qualified healthcare providers. External resources have been carefully selected but are not produced by Western University. References available upon request. Illustrations by vectorjuice on Freepik.