

High heels enjoy a special status in every woman's life. Here's how you can enjoy wearing them at any age minus the pain

by Lipla Negi

HE recently held Golden Globe Awards at Beverly Hills, saw two veteran Hollywood actresses Emma Thompson and Julia Roberts ditch their beloved Christian Louboutin heels for some barefoot comfort.

While Thompson arrived barefoot on stage, holding her high heels in one hand for presenting the award for Best Screenplay, Roberts was seen making her way out of the show sans her heels. In fact, before throwing her heels over her head, Thompson pointed to the red soles in her Christian Louboutin shoes and told the audience, "I just want you to know, this red, it's my blood." Clearly, the two had enough of 'heel love' for the night.

Call them guilty pleasures or absolute necessities, no woman's wardrobe is complete without a pair of killer heels. From making you look taller, leaner and sexier to giving an unbeatableolt to your confidence — the 'satan shoes' indeed have some unprecedented powers. And probably that is why every woman, who loves or hates heels, has at least a pair of stilettoes in her closet. It doesn't matter if you use it often or seldom, you must possess one!

PRIZED POSSESSION

Seen and treated as treasured stuff, women feel passionately for their Jimmy Choo and Christian Louboutin high heels. "High shoes impart you femininity and confidence, something that is very important for every woman. Many ladies walk more confidently and smugly with their," says shoe expert and owner at Ash Amara, Divya Bhatia. From giving height to making you look slender, the reasons are many and the love is unconditional. "I am completely in love with my Classic Black Salvatore Ferragamo heels. They are an iconic piece of art!" says 32-year-old entrepreneur, Poornam Sajid. Resonating the same emotions, makeup expert Pooja Taluja says, "I can't do without my heels and willing to compromise on the comfort factor for the sake of looking good."

SWEET PAIN

Over the years, however, these very treasured heels have received a lot of flak for inflicting long-lasting damage on muscles, bones and posture.

"When you wear heels, your knees are actually thrown backward and as a result you get an exaggerated crawl in the back and the pressure goes in the front of the knee. In the long run, this excessive force applied abnormally to your joints may give you muscle or strain. It is usually with repeated pressure this can bring structural changes, producing extreme wear & tear on the spine, knee and mid-foot. And sometimes, the damage can be irreversible," explains Dr. Rajeev Thakral, Consultant - Orthopedics, Max Hospital, Saket. Most women, however, do not give up on them for the sake of looking slimmer and taller.

AGE BAR

Ageing puts your tolerance and patience with your favourite pair to test. And it seems that maturing beauties Emma Thompson and Julia Roberts just get a taste of it. "Flexibility of the body changes with the age. Plus, the regular use of heel over the years starts causing some serious signs; stiffness in the muscles among many. Thus, one faces tough challenge with heels," states Dr. Harsh Bhargava, Senior consultant, Orthopedics, Apollo Hospital, Delhi.

He further adds, "Regular use of heels makes the calf muscle lose its original length. Though in some millimeters, it can bring big problems. Post 35 or 40, things like gaining weight or even walking barefoot on a flat surface can give one cramps in the calf muscle." Lack of flexibility of the joint and exercising of the muscles are to be blamed for the condition.

STRETCH OUT

Just like the other parts of the body, you need to exercise your feet too, especially when you hold your heels close to your heart. "Rotating the ankles daily is essential and also some heel to

How to stay happy in heels



Taylor Swift

SOLE-SOOTHING



IMPERIAL PEDICURE
Scrub off the dead skin with a wonderful Sufi Scrub, revitalising the skin with a nourishing mask and relieve the muscle tension with a relaxing massage. Plus, nail shaping, filing and polish would make you feel like you are walking on air as you put on those favourite stilettoes.

AVAILABLE AT: The Imperial Spa & Salon, The Imperial Janpath, New Delhi



FOOT REFLEXOLOGY
A stimulating foot massage, it involves applying focused pressure to certain 'reflex points' located in the foot to bring about deeper sense of relaxation. It helps boost blood circulation, stimulate energy flow throughout the body, and reduce muscle and joint pains.

AVAILABLE AT: Bliss Spa by Ravissant, New Delhi

Yoga and Pilates. "All Tango dancers supplement their dance practice with Pilates, Aqua aerobics, core strengthening workout and adequate dose of Vitamin D."

TAKE CARE

"Instead of stilettoes you can go for comfortable options like block heels and wedge heels; also you can use special cushioned soles to ensure more comfort," advises Bhatia. Shares veteran beauty expert Shahnaz Husain, "I now use more wedged heels than stilettoes as they lend more balance to the posture."

When it comes to buying your dream pair, all heel lovers unanimously vote for quality product. "There is a risk of breaking in heels and twisting your ankle if they are not bought from a quality brand. The softness of the base is important as you usually put them on for long durations," believes interior designer Chandani Nishi Iyerani.

Indulge your feet in relaxing foot therapies as well. "Strong foot massage with oils such as Juniper, Peppermint, Grapefruit and Cypress help to keep the lymph nodes open between your toes and around the ankles so that fluids do not build up easily causing the feet to feel hot and puffy. These oils also reduce pressure on the veins and arteries so that any varicose veins or poor blood circulation is improved," explains Herron. Add a good back, neck and shoulder massage to this routine and you can continue to enjoy the pleasure of your lovely heels for many years to come.

A combination of stretching exercises like Yoga & Pilates and regular massages for back, neck & shoulder can help with those heels

toe rocking exercises to find the right balance over the arch of the foot and lengthen the calf muscles. A deep Pyramid Pose also helps to stretch out the calf muscles, knee joints and Achilles tendons to give more support and ease to how you walk whatever shoes you are wearing. In addition, you need to ease out any neck and shoulder tension with a shoulder stand and follow

this with some slow and easy neck rotations from a sitting posture, as sweating heels can throw your neck forward and out of balance," explains Tara Herron, Director, Imperial Spa and Salon, Delhi. Fitness expert Kiran Sawhney, who also trains in Tango, believes that a harmonious relationship between heels and feet can be established and maintained with

PRETTY FEET

You work up your feet through the day. Show them you care with these nourishing products

- Foot cream by Kama Ayurveda; ₹595
- Feet Up Overnight Moisturising Cream by Oranome; ₹249
- Royal Jelly & Pure Honey Pumice Foot Scrub by Marks Spencer; ₹599
- The Chill Pill Massage Oil by Kronokare; ₹1,495

Almond Elegant Legs Mist (anti-fatigue) by L'Occitane; ₹1,390