

# Sole Survivors

Four-inch stilettos are hot. Wobbling, grimacing, and going home because you cannot bear one more minute is not. We talked to podiatrist Hillary Brenner (who owns heels) about how to wear heels without misery.

- **Build up your tolerance with foot exercises.** “Strengthen the muscles, tendons, and ligaments in your feet by picking up a towel with your toes a few times each morning or night. Once they’re strong, your shoes won’t hurt so much, and you can prevent problems like hip, knee, and back pain.”

- **Keep your heels to two inches or less.** Or look for three- or four-inch heels with “platforms under the toes to minimize pressure on the balls of the feet,” says Brenner. And try not to walk or stand on them for more than two hours at a time to decrease stress on your body. The wider the heels are, the more comfortable the shoes will be.

- **Make any shoes more comfortable.** Ideally, your fanciest shoes have chunky, one-inch heels, cushiony supports under the toes, rubber soles that bend easily, and sturdy arch

supports. OK, you can stop laughing. Here’s what you can do instead: Get orthotic inserts with arch support that are made for heels, says Brenner, who likes PediFix Arch Bandage, Foot Petals Amazing Arches, and PediFix Pedi-Gel Arch Pads.

- **Buy shoes a half size too big.** The goal is to alleviate bunions (ick), which are hereditary but are exacerbated when your toes are squeezed together. If you tend to slide out of shoes that are too big, choose ones that have rounded toes or are made of soft leather.