Stop Wearing These Shoes After 50 - What I Got Wrong for 42 Years Transcript

(Transcripts are generated by AI and may contain errors)

Rethinking footwear

This is something I thought I would never This is something I thought I would never wear wear. But after 42 years in the. But after 42 years in the fitness industry, I fitness industry, I can tell you where I was can tell you where I was wrong about wrong about athletic shoes. And athletic shoes. And four things that are four things that are wrong with the shoes wrong with the shoes I've been choosing for over I've been choosing for over four decades. I'm four decades. I'm Debra Atkinson. I'm the Debra Atkinson. I'm the founder of Flipping 50, and founder of Flipping 50, and I'm a little embarrassed I'm a little embarrassed to admit that it to admit that it took me so long took me so long to to to figure this out. I am stubborn.

Someone asked me Someone asked me over 20 years ago over 20 years ago to try to try five-toe shoes, and I five-toe shoes, and I said, "No. No, I said, "No. No, I like a lot of like a lot of cushioning between me cushioning between me and the ground, and and the ground, and they look they look weird." These were my weird." These were my excuses, and I lived with them for a excuses, and I lived with them for a very long time.

very long time. Finally this year, Finally this year, so many people so many people asked, and it's becoming a asked, and it's becoming a trend. So I trend. So I said, "Okay, I think I should pay I should pay attention." So, here's what I attention.

Know your foot type

" So, here's what I learned, but let's learned, but let's start with this. This is a start with this. This is a pair of shoes. Don't pair of shoes. Don't pay attention to the pay attention to the brand, because it doesn't brand, because it doesn't matter. By the way, matter. By the way, I get asked I get asked this question a lot, so I'll this question a lot, so I'll answer it answer it before we go any before we go any further. What brand of further. What brand of shoes do you like? I'm shoes do you like? I'm saying that's not the saying that's not the question you question you should be asking.

should be asking. The question is, what kind of The question is, what kind of foot do you have? Because foot do you have? Because each brand has a whole each brand has a whole line of shoes for line of shoes for your foot. You don't your foot. You don't need shoes that I need shoes that I like and like and fit me, or fit me, or ones that I used to ones that I used to like but didn't like but didn't quite quite quite fit me, even though I fit me, even though I liked them. That is what liked them. That is what we we we will move on to today. But each will move on to today. But each brand has a model brand has a model based on based on who can supinate, who can supinate, pronate, or has a pronate, or has a neutral foot, for neutral foot, for someone with a high someone with a high arch, flat arch, flat feet, or medium feet, or medium arch. And no matter arch. And no matter what you wear them for —running, walking, —running, walking, pickleball, strength pickleball, strength training—it all training—it all matters. So matters. So make sure you make sure you know your know your foot first, know foot first, know the activities the activities you need it for, and you need it for, and can can can test them. This is test them.

The problem of elevated heels

This is probably the best probably the best way. Now way. Now let me tell you let me tell you about all the mistakes about all the mistakes I made. There are I made. There are four problems with a four problems with a shoe I once shoe I once loved, and a shoe loved, and a shoe I probably I probably advised too advised too many people to go and many people to go and take a look at. Here is the take a look at. Here is the first of them. Number first of them. Number one: There's a lift in the heel, one: There's a lift in the heel, especially in running and especially in running and walking shoes, walking shoes, and it's designed and it's designed to essentially push to essentially push you forward.

Remember cross trainers? Aha. Have you remembered them for a long time? Me neither. I remembered them for a

long time? Me neither. I never liked them. I've never liked them. I've never bought one for myself.

never bought one for myself. In fact, In fact, I've probably always I've probably always worn worn worn running shoes to lift running shoes to lift weights. But I had weights. But I had high Reeboks, just like high Reeboks, just like you. Yellow like a you. Yellow like a banana. Wasn't that banana. Wasn't that cool? But they were cool? But they were flatter. And the reason flatter. And the reason was aerobics, and was aerobics, and often on often on carpet we wanted to carpet we wanted to move freely on move freely on the floor and didn't want the floor and didn't want anything like anything like that. You can see how the sole is slightly raised here and how it the sole is slightly raised here and how it protrudes to the side. This protrudes to the side. This actually makes us actually makes us not very stable not very stable during lateral movements. This during lateral movements. This prevents us from prevents us from moving sideways. So, moving sideways. So, these shoes are designed these shoes are designed for forward movement for forward movement and only forward movement. So it's and only forward movement. So it's not the best shoe not the best shoe for lateral movements. This is for lateral movements. This is not something you would buy not something you would buy for that. But for that. But the real problem is the real problem is when the heel here is when the heel here is raised higher than the forefoot. This is clearly visible.

forefoot. This is clearly visible. So if I were So if I were to put this on a to put this on a flat surface, flat surface, how many inches is this? how many inches is this?

One and a half, maybe? One and a half, maybe? You know, but here it's You know, but here it's much less. This much less. This means that my means that my Achilles tendon, Achilles tendon, like yours, and my calf like yours, and my calf muscle are contracting. That's muscle are contracting. That's never good, is never good, is it? Why do we it? Why do we need that need that calf muscle? We calf muscle? We need him. We need him. We need to need to stretch it well to stretch it well to lengthen these muscles lengthen these muscles to have full to have full range of motion in the range of motion in the ankle ankle ankle joint. Otherwise, joint. Otherwise, it will become a it will become a problem with age. With problem with age. With contracted muscles, contracted muscles, chronically tense chronically tense Achilles Achilles Achilles tendons, which are less tendons, which are less elastic, they will not elastic, they will not spring back if spring back if we keep them we keep them constantly tense. We know this, women. We know this, women who love to wear who love to wear heels, which are very heels, which are very pretty but uncomfortable, pretty but uncomfortable, but from time to time we but from time to time we still do it. You still do it. You know how your know how your Achilles tendon and Achilles tendon and calf contract calf contract and tighten.

and tighten. After this, not After this, not only does the front of only does the front of the foot or perhaps the " ankle" hurt, but you also ankle" hurt, but you also feel feel feel tension and pain in the tension and pain in the back of back of the shin. This is not something that is the shin. This is not something that is good in good in the long the long the long run. So, first of all, we don't first of all, we don't need this heel lift. When you need this heel lift. When you start looking at start looking at a shoe like this, " zero gravity," it has zero gravity," it has zero zero zero heel lift.

It is the same from It is the same from the heel to the the heel to the forefoot. Suddenly forefoot. Suddenly you become much you become much more aware of more aware of the length in the front and the the length in the front and the length in the back. You length in the back. You become much become much more neutral more neutral and stable so you and stable so you can really can really feel your body.

This is a really important This is a really important distinction, and I'll distinction, and I'll show you how I show you how I work at my desk in the work at my desk in the middle of the day, and also middle of the day, and also prove how prove how important it is beyond just important it is beyond just training. Because what is training. Because what is this? 45 minutes to this? 45 minutes to an hour, probably an hour, probably most days?

most days? At least, that's how it is for me. At least, that's how it is for me. I don't do much I don't do much sports. I am sports. I am very consistent, and very consistent, and when I train, I give it my when I train, I give it my all, all, all, but I try to but I try to move often throughout the move often throughout the day. And when I'm standing still day. And when I'm standing still, I also, I also try to watch try to watch my posture so that I'm my posture so that I'm standing straight, not standing straight, not just standing, because we just standing, because we can slouch in can slouch in that position too. We that position too. We don't have to sit don't have to sit on a chair to on a chair to

round our back or round our back or spine. So do spine. So do you see the difference between this and you see the difference between this and this? Just this? Just standing up straight and standing up straight and creating space between your creating space between your vertebrae makes a vertebrae makes a big difference. And I'll big difference. And I'll tell you what the tell you what the difference is between me and difference is between me and my mindfulness, my mindfulness, and what can work and what can work for you too. But the for you too. But the first problem with first problem with traditional shoes is the raised heel.

Cushioning and foot engagement

The second is The second is depreciation. I already depreciation. I already mentioned the rise, mentioned the rise, but it's modest, wouldn't you but it's modest, wouldn't you agree? You know agree? You know the brands with four the brands with four letters in the name, I'll letters in the name, I'll let you let you fill in the blanks yourself.

They're like pillows, They're like pillows, right? And we are all right? And we are all driven to do this because driven to do this because today a significant today a significant portion of our portion of our population is population is overweight or obese, and overweight or obese, and we think that is we think that is reasonable. That if I reasonable. That if I make my shoes soft, my make my shoes soft, my joints, which already joints, which already hurt from being hurt from being overweight, will get overweight, will get cushioning, and it cushioning, and it will be easier to train will be easier to train, with less, with less stress on my stress on my joints. This is not entirely joints. This is not entirely true, but it is true, but it is intuitively believed.

That's why it's not true. If your foot If your foot doesn't actually doesn't actually interact with the ground and interact with the ground and the surface you're the surface you're standing on, the foot muscles standing on, the foot muscles actually atrophy. They are speechless. They. They are speechless. They will not become will not become stronger.

stronger. stronger. In fact, if you In fact, if you wear these shoes wear these shoes year after year, they year after year, they will only become will only become weaker. I want to weaker. I want to draw your attention, draw your attention, ask you to ask you to pay attention to what is pay attention to what is happening happening happening now. So, for any young couple any young couple you know who you know who have children, what have children, what they hear from their they hear from their pediatrician is just pediatrician is just amazing, but we amazing, but we should think about it should think about it for ourselves as well. They hear : "Don't put them in your : "Don't put them in your shoes." Even the shoes." Even the cutest little cutest little Nikes I bought for my Nikes I bought for my grandson, my kids won't grandson, my kids won't wear them on him, it wear them on him, it just kills me, just kills me, right? Even for the sake of your right? Even for the sake of your big toe, big toe, please. But they please. But they don't put them on don't put them on him because they know that him because they know that all the nerve all the nerve endings in the foot endings in the foot allow the child allow the child to interact with to interact with the floor. So, he is 10 the floor. So, he is 10 months old. He is learning months old. He is learning now he is now he is pulling himself up to pulling himself up to stand up. He walks, stand up. He walks, leaning on furniture, leaning on furniture, and learns by receiving and learns by receiving information through his information through his feet from the floor, feet from the floor, right? But once we right? But once we push them into shoes, they don't. We used to, they don't. We used to think that this gives them think that this gives them more support, a more support, a better ability better ability to walk, because they're more to walk, because they're more stable. It's the stable. It's the opposite. They will be opposite. They will be much more much more much more stable people if they if they interact with interact with the surface of the floor, and so will the surface of the floor, and so will we. And you can we. And you can return it. Of course, you're return it. Of course, you're unlikely to become a 10- month-old with the month-old with the strength they have, strength they have, but we can get something but we can get something back. But you back. But you should avoid should avoid these shoes with these shoes with high cushioning. So, when is it appropriate. So, when is it appropriate to wear these shoes?

You know, I probably wouldn't You know, I probably wouldn't wear these, but wear these, but if I were going on a really if I were going on a really long walk, long walk, if I were going to if I were going to walk for an hour or, walk for an hour or, let's say, I was walking on a let's say, I was walking on a trail with a friend, I would trail with a friend, I would probably wear them.

Or I would wear something Or I would wear something like trail running like trail running shoes, which have shoes, which have much better much better traction. If I were traction. If I were walking on trails with walking on trails with rocks or rocks or uneven surfaces uneven surfaces where there might where there might be tree roots underfoot, I would be tree roots underfoot, I would probably want less probably want less cushioning cushioning cushioning than traction than traction to feel to feel safe. But if I'm safe. But if I'm just walking or just walking or moving around the moving around the house, I want to house, I want to feel my body.

So, two So, two shoe mistakes that can be shoe mistakes that can be fixed, and I'm going to step back now fixed, and I'm going to step back now so you so you can see what it can see what it looks like from a distance, so looks like from a distance, so you can see how I'm standing.

When I work from home, which is When I work from home, which is all the time, I all the time, I often have to often have to conduct conduct workshops, webinars, or workshops, webinars, or meetings, and instead of meetings, and instead of sitting, I sitting, I stand. And this is my stand. And this is my exercise bike for my exercise bike for my desk. I know desk. I know it's strange, but I can it's strange, but I can lift the table and then I'm lift the table and then I'm standing in front of standing in front of natural natural natural sunlight; it's great for sunlight; it's great for mood and for mood and for lighting. I'm standing lighting. I'm standing here and talking here and talking directly to the camera, directly to the camera, instead of instead of sitting and slouching.

But I'm wearing my " Palubas"—they're Palubas"—they're Palubas"—they're five-toed sneakers with five-toed sneakers with zero drop, zero drop, so the heel and so the heel and toe height are the same. I toe height are the same. I got a little got a little depreciation, but depreciation, but I'll tell you what I'll tell you what happened. The difference isn't happened. The difference isn't so much in my foot.

so much in my foot. And yes, it's a little And yes, it's a little strange to put them on at first. strange to put them on at first. The fingers feel The fingers feel different, but they different, but they can move can move independently. We'll independently. We'll talk about this later.

talk about this later. Now I will give you a Now I will give you a test. But I feel very good about test. But I feel very good about my my my posture. What changed posture. What changed for me when I put them on for me when I put them on wasn't just, "Oh, my feet feel better.", my feet feel better." My ankle doesn't My ankle doesn't hurt that much. That's hurt that much. That's true, but I really true, but I really notice that I stand notice that I stand differently. I feel differently. I feel every muscle in my every muscle in my body. In fact, body. In fact, surprisingly, I surprisingly, I feel better in my feel better in my hamstrings hamstrings, glutes, and spine. I, glutes, and spine. I stand straighter and stand straighter and pay more pay more attention to my posture attention to my posture when I stand, give a when I stand, give a workshop, or workshop, or type answers. It's type answers. It's just a sense of just a sense of awareness, awareness, awareness, because when your foundation — and it's the most important thing in — and it's the most important thing in a house — when it's a house — when it's strong and it's the foundation for strong and it's the foundation for everything else, every everything else, every joint up the joint up the kinetic chain, kinetic chain, as we call it, as we call it, functions a little bit functions a little bit better. I've noticed that better. I've noticed that when I wear them for 6 to 8 when I wear them for 6 to 8 hours a day, even hours a day, even at home—walking from at home—walking from one end of the house one end of the house to the other, standing at to the other, standing at work, or even work, or even sitting, or playing sitting, or playing with my grandson, when I'm sitting with my grandson, when I'm sitting with him. All of this with him. All of this helps me helps me feel a little feel a little better and generally better and generally feel better in all the muscles in feel better in all the muscles in my body. So, if my body.

Toe box compression

So, if I improve everything by even I improve everything by even 5% during the day, it 5% during the day, it matters and gives matters and gives results. But I want to results. But I want to point out two other point out two other problems that are problems that are common to common to regular or regular or traditional shoes traditional shoes and sports and sports equipment. And these are clenched toes.

We already talked about We already talked about shoes with small shoes with small heels, right? These heels,

right? These little shoes, and little shoes, and I have a pair of high I have a pair of high heels that I really heels that I really like to wear with that like to wear with that cute dress, right cute dress, right? But they are? But they are pointed, I am wearing pointed, I am wearing high heels, and I am high heels, and I am pinching my foot, the pinching my foot, the front of it, and my front of it, and my ankle right in ankle right in these shoes. Not these shoes. Not good, not good, not good at all. But even good at all. But even running shoes running shoes do the same thing, do the same thing, right? They are more right? They are more pointed than pointed than rounded.

rounded. Today you can Today you can buy more buy more models, mostly models, mostly for walking than for for walking than for running, with a wider running, with a wider toe box toe box so they are not as so they are not as narrow, which is a good narrow, which is a good first step or first step or start. But I want start. But I want you to see the you to see the difference, because I take difference, because I take them off, and look at the them off, and look at the difference in the width of the difference in the width of the sock, okay? Here it's sock, okay? Here it's much wider from much wider from this point to this, this point to this, and the fingers are and the fingers are straight. They are not straight. They are not trapped inside.

So, like my toes, So, like my toes, they're starting to they're starting to get crooked, and I don't get crooked, and I don't know about you, but my know about you, but my bunioned foot bunioned foot is starting to look like this is starting to look like this, and it's not pretty at all, and it's not pretty at all. It was my. It was my grandmother. I don't want to be like that grandmother. I don't want to be like that. But if we. But if we continue to squeeze our continue to squeeze our feet into shoes like this, where feet into shoes like this, where we squeeze them into a we squeeze them into a narrow toe, we will narrow toe, we will eventually eventually eventually cause similar cause similar problems. So problems. So the advantage of the Pluvo, the the advantage of the Pluvo, the five- five- five- toe shoe, which I'll toe shoe, which I'll talk about in a moment, talk about in a moment, is that there's is that there's no heel lift. Please note: note: the cushioning is the same along the entire the cushioning is the same along the entire length of the sole length of the sole —here, in —here, in the middle, and at the end. There is the middle, and at the end. There is no lift here. We do no lift here. We do n't push our foot n't push our foot forward. So, zero forward. So, zero gravity. There is very gravity. There is very little depreciation here. But it is little depreciation here. But it is enough, and it is enough, and it is convenient. If convenient. If you press it, it you press it, it bends, but it's not very bends, but it's not very soft. So you have a soft. So you have a little bit of cushioning little bit of cushioning to protect you from the to protect you from the surface you're surface you're walking on. You don't walking on. You don't feel…

feel… feel… It's basically tile, so it's like It's basically tile, so it's like cement. It's still cement. It's still very, very comfortable, and very, very comfortable, and you have a wider toe.

you have a wider toe. So, there is room for the toes to toes to spread out. They spread out. They should diverge, should diverge, right? And the fourth right?

Independent toe movement

And the fourth thing—no other shoe has ever felt this way before. Do you felt this way before. Do you remember the 70s? Did you have remember the 70s? Did you have socks with socks with toes? I had them.

toes? I had them. They were rainbow-colored. They were rainbow-colored. Mhm. And thank God, I Mhm. And thank God, I threw them away. But they threw them away. But they came back. Here they came back. Here they all move all move independently. So each of independently. So each of your fingers has its your fingers has its own compartment.

own compartment. I'll tell you, the first time I'll tell you, the first time I put them on, it I put them on, it took about 3 took about 3 minutes. But you don't minutes. But you don't get that get that freedom of movement. And I freedom of movement. And I want you to want you to try to do it with try to do it with me. I want you to try it.

you to try it. Place your foot flat. Place your foot flat. I am without shoes now. I am without shoes now. Place your foot flat, Place your foot flat, just like my fingers just like my fingers. Try. Try taking your thumb taking your thumb and lifting it separately, can you, can you do it? They must do it? They must be able to be able to move

independently.

move independently. Not as good as Not as good as fingers, but fingers, but they should move. they should move. Can you do this? Can you do this? Now keep your Now keep your thumb thumb thumb pressed down and pressed down and try to lift the try to lift the other four.

other four. Can you do this? Can you do this? It's harder for me. My It's harder for me. My thumb wants thumb wants to go up. And this is something to go up. And this is something worth worth worth working on. This can be working on. This can be improved with practice, improved with practice, but if you are constantly but if you are constantly squeezing your toes into your squeezing your toes into your shoes, never shoes, never straightening them, and straightening them, and walking barefoot. Some walking barefoot. Some of you might be looking at of you might be looking at this and thinking, "You know, this and thinking, "You know, yoga helps me with this.

yoga helps me with this. " And, apparently, it " And, apparently, it is. You is. You interact with interact with the floor in such a way that your the floor in such a way that your foot seems foot seems to grab onto it, to grab onto it, strengthening the muscles on strengthening the muscles on the sole. They become the sole. They become stronger during stronger during such exercises. And if you such exercises. And if you don't do yoga, don't do yoga, even when you walk around even when you walk around barefoot at home, you're barefoot at home, you're most likely just most likely just hanging around. You don't hanging around. You don't get get get enough enough enough grip and grip and stabilization. When you are stabilization. When you are in yoga poses, your in yoga poses, your stability stability stability depends on your feet and your depends on your feet and your ability to maintain ability to maintain balance. Performing balance. Performing these exercises will help these exercises will help restore mobility. But this will help too.

. But this will help too. You can treat You can treat them like slippers them like slippers if you want. That's how I if you want. That's how I started started started wearing them. At first I was wearing them. At first I was skeptical because they skeptical because they looked strange. I looked strange. I knew I wanted to wear knew I wanted to wear them outside the house, and I them outside the house, and I started. If you, like me, are over 60, you become, are over 60, you become less interested in what less interested in what others think. You have others think. You have less time on this less time on this planet to planet to waste waste waste worrying about what other people worrying about what other people think. I really don't care think. I really don't care. But sometimes. But sometimes I don't care.

I don't care. I take my words I take my words back. But really, back. But really, I want to feel I want to feel comfortable. I don't want to comfortable. I don't want to feel pain. I feel pain. I definitely don't want to be the definitely don't want to be the cause of my own cause of my own pain. So why would I pain. So why would I do this? I've found do this? I've found that wearing them at home that wearing them at home for 6-8 hours a day— a few hours in the morning, a few hours in the morning, and then maybe I have to and then maybe I have to run out for run out for errands, so I'll put on a errands, so I'll put on a different shoe or go different shoe or go for a longer walk for a longer walk and want more and want more cushioning for my cushioning for my foot—then yes. Then foot—then yes. Then I resort to them. But I resort to them. But wearing these products wearing these products allows your fingers allows your fingers to move independently, to move independently, feel the floor, and feel the floor, and monitor your posture— simply because it's much easier to do so in them. And it's much easier to do so in them. And it's not the same as walking not the same as walking barefoot. They have a little bit of barefoot. They have a little bit of depreciation, and depreciation, and I also have a dog. You know, I also have a dog. You know, the floor isn't always the floor isn't always perfectly clean. So, perfectly clean. So, these four things can these four things can become mistakes when become mistakes when you allow yourself to you allow yourself to think, "Oh, I have the think, "Oh, I have the best shoes." " best shoes." " I have great sneakers." "Pile of depreciation". And you may think that's a. And you may think that's a great thing, but great thing, but I'm here to tell you that it can it can hold you back. Or if hold you back. Or if you're really attached you're really attached to your shoes. I to your shoes. I still like mine.

Also, give yourself Also, give yourself the opportunity the opportunity the opportunity to try something that to try something that allows you to open and allows you to open and spread your toes spread your toes thanks to a wider thanks to a wider toe box and move your toe box and move your feet and toes feet and toes independently. Try

independently. Try yoga. Try Pilovis.

yoga. Try Pilovis. If you want If you want to try some like to try some like mine—they don't have to be red, but I be red, but I thought, "Hey, they thought, "Hey, they look different." look different." So why not So why not draw attention to this draw attention to this. I will share the. I will share the link below. I link below. I highly highly highly recommend this if recommend this if you are looking for a way you are looking for a way to improve your posture without having to constantly think about sitting up constantly think about sitting up straight, standing straight, straight, standing straight, or rolling your shoulders or rolling your shoulders back. This will naturally back. This will naturally help you help you fix it.

fix it. See you on the other See you on the other side.