



Orthopaedic foot and ankle surgeon, **Sam Singh**, says that partner dancing is not as dangerous for the feet and ankles as, say, ballet dancing. However, if there is a pre-existing condition, dancing can aggravate it.

He makes the following recommendations to treat tired dance feet:

- Stretch the calf muscles before dancing.
- Minimise the load on the front of the foot by strengthening the core muscles in your stomach.
- If you have hurt your foot or your leg, but you are used to walking on heels, don't go straight into flat shoes. This will cause more pain because you won't give the calf muscle time to relax and

stretch. The change of height has to be gradual.

- Avoid ill-fitting shoes. Tight shoes can provoke Morton's neuroma, which occurs as the nerve passes under the ligament connecting the toe bones (metatarsals) in the forefoot.

Morton's neuroma most frequently develops between the third and fourth toes, usually in response to irritation, trauma or excessive pressure. The incidence of Morton's neuroma is eight to ten times greater in women than in men.

- Shoes that rub the heel bone too much can generate a bone growth and irritation, so choose shoes with soft backs or add padding to them.
- Use gel insoles for discomfort relief.
- Once you have finished dancing, roll your foot on a tennis ball.

Top tip: If the foot is aching after prolonged use, put a small empty glass bottle in the fridge and then roll the cooling delight under your feet.

→ regularly to get the best performance possible. It is also important that shoes should be appropriate for the type of dance one is performing. While this advice may seem like common sense, dancers who participate in a number of varieties of the art, such as tap, jazz, and ballet, should purchase a separate pair of shoes for each type of dance.

"For disco or freestyle dancing, many teachers insist on the wearing of jazz shoes or boots, again for the support given by this type of shoe," adds Lingard. "Some ballet schools that teach disco and freestyle do allow bare feet."

"For rock 'n' roll, it is essential to wear supportive shoes with padded soles of some sort, because of the repetitive bouncing on the floor, as these will protect the feet.

"Normal trainers (not dance trainers) should never be worn, as they have the type of non-slip sole for gymnasiums, which is totally unsuitable for dance and causes a 'drag' on the knees and ankles every time a turn is made on the foot."

So, yes, it would seem that we do need our dance shoes. Thank God for that. ●

WIN We have an exquisite pair of dance shoes from the Elite range at Rotate (www.rotateuk.com) up for grabs. To enter the competition, just answer the following: **Specify one quality that a good pair of dance shoes should have.** Send your answer, along with your name and address, to us by post or email (see contacts on page 5) to arrive no later than June 5. Winners will be drawn at random.

