

## The positive side of high-heeled shoes

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**Introduction:** Wearing high heels is a common practice, especially among women, and is part of the social and professional environment in urban life. Research on the subject often focuses on the symptoms and health effects of high heels, including discomfort, pain, musculoskeletal disorders, and deformities, particularly in the feet. As few studies have evaluated the subjective effects of high heels, we investigated why some people are adept at wearing them, while others are not.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional, quantitative study was conducted using a self-administered online questionnaire that covered participants' profiles and reasons for wearing high-heeled shoes or not. The convenience sample consisted of women aged  $\geq 18$  years. Data were collected between November 2023 and March 2024.

**Results:** A total of 1100 responses were obtained, with a final sample of 801 participants. The variables significantly associated with the use of high heels were age, education, profession, approximate family income, and nutritional status. 80% of participants reported wearing high heels for aesthetics, 63% felt more beautiful, 21% to get taller, 54% to improve professional appearance, and 47% reported improved self-esteem with the use of this garment.

**Conclusion:** Most participants wear high heels for aesthetic reasons, with a significant percentage feeling more beautiful and with improved self-esteem. Although the majority of participants who wear high heels experience pain (66%), they report sufficient subjective reasons to continue wearing them. Among those who reported not wearing high heels, the main reason was foot pain or discomfort.

**Keywords:** Footwear; Self Concept; Pain.

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