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## **High heels shorten women's leg muscles**

[http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1007/100719-high\\_heels.html](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1007/100719-high_heels.html)

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19th July, 2010

## THE ARTICLE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1007/100719-high\\_heels.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1007/100719-high_heels.html)

Scientists have found out that women who wear high-heel shoes make the calf muscles shorter. The heels also give many women pain in their legs when they take them off and walk. The researchers tested different women aged between 20 and 50 who wore heels that were 5cm or higher. The research, which covered a two-year period, also looked at women who never wore high heels. The research team used ultrasound to measure the length of the fibres in the calf muscles. Their results showed that the muscle fibres of high-heel wearers were 13 per cent shorter than those in the non-high-heel-wearing women. Lead researcher Professor Marco Narci said: "This confirmed the hypothesis that when you place the muscle in a shorter position, the fibres become shorter."

The researchers also found that women who regularly wore high heels suffered more muscle aches and pains when they took their shoes off. This is because their muscles are being overstretched for long periods and do not have time to relax. Professor Narci said it was harder for women to stretch their feet out when they took their shoes off. He did advise women to do simple stretching exercises to relieve the pain. "If you stand on your tip toes and lower your heels up and down again it will stretch out the tendons making it easier to walk without heels," he said. He did not suggest women stop wearing high heels but recommended wearing flat shoes a little more often. "Fashion is intended to be uncomfortable and none of the women in the study planned to give up their high heels," he said.

# WARM-UPS

**1. HIGH HEELS:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about high heels. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*scientists / shoes / muscles / pain in your legs / ultrasound / results / hypothesis / regularly / suffered / relax / stretching / exercise / standing on tip toes / fashion*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. FASHION:** Good or bad? Complete this table and talk about it with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you heard. Change and share again.

	Good or bad?
High heels	
Tattoos	
Body piercing	
Jewellery	
Make-up	
Fur	

**4. FASHION:** Students A **strongly** believe it is a good thing; Students B **strongly** believe it's stupid. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. ACHES AND PAINS:** Which are the worst? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- Calf
- Head
- Back
- Stomach
- Head
- Finger
- Heart
- Toe

**6. SHOES:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'shoes'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1007/100719-high\\_heels.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1007/100719-high_heels.html)

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. Wearing high heels makes women's legs shorter.                      | T / F |
| b. Researchers tested between 20 and 50 women over a five-year period. | T / F |
| c. Researchers used a special technique using sounds to test muscles.  | T / F |
| d. High heels can make muscles 13 per cent shorter.                    | T / F |
| e. Women suffer more pain when their high heels are on.                | T / F |
| f. High heels help to relax muscles over a period of time.             | T / F |
| g. A professor advised women to sit down and stretch their toes.       | T / F |
| h. The professor said fashion wasn't meant to be about comfort.        | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article.

- |              |                   |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. found out | a. recommend      |
| 2. tested    | b. revealed       |
| 3. covered   | c. frequently     |
| 4. showed    | d. analyzed       |
| 5. place     | e. meant          |
| 6. regularly | f. quit           |
| 7. advise    | g. discovered     |
| 8. relieve   | h. put            |
| 9. intended  | i. ease           |
| 10. give up  | j. stretched over |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |                                  |                       |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. high-heel shoes make the calf | a. year period        |
| 2. The heels also give many      | b. stretch their feet |
| 3. covered a two-                | c. the hypothesis     |
| 4. measure the length            | d. without heels      |
| 5. This confirmed                | e. women pain         |
| 6. women who regularly           | f. overstretched      |
| 7. their muscles are being       | g. of the fibres      |
| 8. harder for women to           | h. be uncomfortable   |
| 9. easier to walk                | i. muscles shorter    |
| 10. Fashion is intended to       | j. wore high heels    |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1007/100719-high\\_heels.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1007/100719-high_heels.html)

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Scientists have \_\_\_\_\_ out that women who wear high-heel shoes make the calf muscles \_\_\_\_\_. The heels also give many women pain in their legs when they take them off and walk. The researchers tested different women aged between 20 and 50 who \_\_\_\_\_ heels that were 5cm or higher. The research, which covered a two-year \_\_\_\_\_, also looked at women who never wore high heels. The research team used ultrasound to measure the \_\_\_\_\_ of the fibres in the calf muscles. Their results showed that the muscle fibres of high-heel \_\_\_\_\_ were 13 per cent shorter than those in the non-high-heel-wearing women. Lead researcher Professor Marco Narci said: "This \_\_\_\_\_ the hypothesis that when you place the muscle in a shorter \_\_\_\_\_, the fibres become shorter."

wearers  
period  
position  
shorter  
confirmed  
found  
length  
wore

The researchers also \_\_\_\_\_ that women who regularly wore high heels suffered more muscle aches and pains when they took their shoes off. This is because their muscles are \_\_\_\_\_ overstretched for long periods and do not have time to \_\_\_\_\_. Professor Narci said it was harder for women to stretch their feet out when they took their shoes off. He did \_\_\_\_\_ women to do simple stretching exercises to relieve the pain. "If you stand on your \_\_\_\_\_ toes and lower your heels up and down again it will stretch out the tendons making it easier to walk \_\_\_\_\_ heels," he said. He did not suggest women stop wearing high heels but recommended wearing \_\_\_\_\_ shoes a little more often."Fashion is intended to be uncomfortable and none of the women in the study planned to \_\_\_\_\_ up their high heels," he said.

flat  
being  
give  
tip  
found  
relax  
without  
advise

## LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1007/100719-high\\_heels.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1007/100719-high_heels.html)

Scientists \_\_\_\_\_ women who wear high-heel shoes make the calf muscles shorter. The heels \_\_\_\_\_ in their legs when they take them off and walk. The researchers tested different women aged between 20 and 50 \_\_\_\_\_ 5cm or higher. The research, which covered a two-year period, also looked at women who never wore high heels. The research team used ultrasound to \_\_\_\_\_ the fibres in the calf muscles. Their results showed that the muscle fibres of high-heel wearers were 13 per cent shorter than those in the \_\_\_\_\_ women. Lead researcher Professor Marco Narci said: "This confirmed the hypothesis that when you place the muscle in a shorter position, \_\_\_\_\_."

The researchers also found that women \_\_\_\_\_ heels suffered more muscle aches and pains when they took their shoes off. This is because their muscles \_\_\_\_\_ for long periods and do not have time to relax. Professor Narci said it was harder for women to \_\_\_\_\_ when they took their shoes off. He did advise women to do simple stretching exercises to relieve the pain. "If you stand on your tip toes and \_\_\_\_\_ and down again it will stretch out the tendons making it easier to walk without heels," he said. He did not suggest women stop wearing high heels but \_\_\_\_\_ shoes a little more often." \_\_\_\_\_ uncomfortable and none of the women in the study planned to give up their high heels," he said.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1007/100719-high\\_heels.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1007/100719-high_heels.html)

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'high' and 'heel'.

<b>high</b>	<b>heel</b>
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- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• found</li><li>• take</li><li>• 5</li><li>• used</li><li>• 13</li><li>• place</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• regularly</li><li>• long</li><li>• stretch</li><li>• stand</li><li>• suggest</li><li>• uncomfortable</li></ul>
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# STUDENT HIGH HEELS SURVEY

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1007/100719-high\\_heels.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1007/100719-high_heels.html)

Write five GOOD questions about high heels in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.



# HIGH HEELS DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the term 'high heels'?
- c) Do you care about fashion in shoes?
- d) What do you think of high heels?
- e) Do you think it matters that high heels make calf muscles shorter?
- f) What are your favourite shoes?
- g) Is it OK for men to wear high heels?
- h) Should we all wear shoes that are good for our health?
- i) Do high heels make women look better?
- j) What other dangers of high heels are there?

*High heels shorten women's leg muscles - 19th July, 2010*  
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# HIGH HEELS DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What aches and pains do you get?
- c) Women still wear high heels even though they get muscle pain. Why do they do this?
- d) What's important for you when you buy shoes?
- e) Do you think high heels should carry health warnings?
- f) Do you think someone could sue a high-heel-shoe maker if they fell over and hurt themselves?
- g) What's the highest a heel could be?
- h) What's the earliest age people should start wearing high heels?
- i) Is fashion "intended to be uncomfortable"?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Professor Marco Narci?

# LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1007/100719-high\\_heels.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1007/100719-high_heels.html)

Scientists have found (1) \_\_\_\_\_ that women who wear high-heel shoes make the calf muscles shorter. The heels also give many women pain (2) \_\_\_\_\_ their legs when they take them off and walk. The researchers tested different women aged between 20 and 50 who wore heels that were 5cm or higher. The research, which (3) \_\_\_\_\_ a two-year period, also looked at women who never wore high heels. The research team used ultrasound to measure the (4) \_\_\_\_\_ of the fibres in the calf muscles. Their results showed that the muscle fibres of high-heel wearers were 13 per cent shorter than (5) \_\_\_\_\_ in the non-high-heel-wearing women. Lead researcher Professor Marco Narci said: "This confirmed the hypothesis (6) \_\_\_\_\_ when you place the muscle in a shorter position, the fibres become shorter."

The researchers also found that women who (7) \_\_\_\_\_ wore high heels suffered more muscle aches and pains when they took their shoes off. This is because their muscles are (8) \_\_\_\_\_ overstretched for long periods and do not have time to relax. Professor Narci said it was harder for women to stretch their feet (9) \_\_\_\_\_ when they took their shoes off. He did advise women to do simple stretching exercises to (10) \_\_\_\_\_ the pain. "If you stand on your tip toes and lower your heels up and down again it will stretch out the tendons making it easier to walk without heels," he said. He did not (11) \_\_\_\_\_ women stop wearing high heels but recommended wearing flat shoes a little more often. "Fashion is intended to be uncomfortable and none of the women in the study planned to (12) \_\_\_\_\_ up their high heels," he said.

## Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- |     |                |               |                |                |
|-----|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1.  | (a) in         | (b) up        | (c) out        | (d) on         |
| 2.  | (a) on         | (b) in        | (c) of         | (d) to         |
| 3.  | (a) covered    | (b) placed    | (c) put        | (d) smothered  |
| 4.  | (a) long       | (b) longing   | (c) longs      | (d) length     |
| 5.  | (a) these      | (b) them      | (c) those      | (d) that       |
| 6.  | (a) which      | (b) what      | (c) that       | (d) this       |
| 7.  | (a) regulars   | (b) regularly | (c) regular    | (d) regulated  |
| 8.  | (a) being      | (b) real      | (c) sure       | (d) stretching |
| 9.  | (a) up         | (b) out       | (c) in         | (d) over       |
| 10. | (a) relieve    | (b) relive    | (c) relief     | (d) leave      |
| 11. | (a) suggestion | (b) suggested | (c) suggestive | (d) suggest    |
| 12. | (a) take       | (b) stop      | (c) do         | (d) give       |

**WRITING**

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1007/100719-high\\_heels.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1007/100719-high_heels.html)

Write about **high heels** for 10 minutes. Correct your partner’s paper.

Horizontal lines for writing.

# HOMework

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about high heels. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. HIGH HEELS:** Make a poster about high heels. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. FASHION:** Write a magazine article about high heels. Include imaginary interviews with a fashion designer and someone who has problems because of high heels.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to a shoe designer. Ask him/her three questions about high heels. Give him/her three of your opinions on them. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F      b. F      c. T      d. T      e. F      f. F      g. F      h. T

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |              |                   |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. found out | a. discovered     |
| 2. tested    | b. analyzed       |
| 3. covered   | c. stretched over |
| 4. showed    | d. revealed       |
| 5. place     | e. put            |
| 6. regularly | f. frequently     |
| 7. advise    | g. recommend      |
| 8. relieve   | h. ease           |
| 9. intended  | i. meant          |
| 10. give up  | j. quit           |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                  |                       |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. high-heel shoes make the calf | a. muscles shorter    |
| 2. The heels also give many      | b. women pain         |
| 3. covered a two-                | c. year period        |
| 4. measure the length            | d. of the fibres      |
| 5. This confirmed                | e. the hypothesis     |
| 6. women who regularly           | f. wore high heels    |
| 7. their muscles are being       | g. overstretched      |
| 8. harder for women to           | h. stretch their feet |
| 9. easier to walk                | i. without heels      |
| 10. Fashion is intended to       | j. be uncomfortable   |

## GAP FILL:

### High heels shorten women's leg muscles

Scientists have **found** out that women who wear high-heel shoes make the calf muscles **shorter**. The heels also give many women pain in their legs when they take them off and walk. The researchers tested different women aged between 20 and 50 who **wore** heels that were 5cm or higher. The research, which covered a two-year **period**, also looked at women who never wore high heels. The research team used ultrasound to measure the **length** of the fibres in the calf muscles. Their results showed that the muscle fibres of high-heel **wearers** were 13 per cent shorter than those in the non-high-heel-wearing women. Lead researcher Professor Marco Narci said: "This **confirmed** the hypothesis that when you place the muscle in a shorter **position**, the fibres become shorter."

The researchers also **found** that women who regularly wore high heels suffered more muscle aches and pains when they took their shoes off. This is because their muscles are **being** overstretched for long periods and do not have time to **relax**. Professor Narci said it was harder for women to stretch their feet out when they took their shoes off. He did **advise** women to do simple stretching exercises to relieve the pain. "If you stand on your **tip** toes and lower your heels up and down again it will stretch out the tendons making it easier to walk **without** heels," he said. He did not suggest women stop wearing high heels but recommended wearing **flat** shoes a little more often. "Fashion is intended to be uncomfortable and none of the women in the study planned to **give** up their high heels," he said.

## LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - c    2 - b    3 - a    4 - d    5 - c    6 - c    7 - b    8 - a    9 - b    10 - a    11 - d    12 - d