

L LIFESTYLE

Beware of high heels

High heels can cause a lot of problems

WHILE HIGH HEELS may help you put your best fashion foot forward, their prolonged use may be a step backward for the health of your feet, new research says. The research, done at a US university, proves that wearing high heels can strengthen the ankle initially, but leads to weakening and instability over time.

“With prolonged use you get muscle shortening in the back of the leg and muscle lengthening in the front of the leg. These changes in muscle length then can change muscle strength,” said Tricia Turner, associate professor of kinesiology at University of North Carolina at Charlotte. The researchers looked at ankle strength and balance in women training to be flight attendants, collecting data for each class year, freshman through senior, to consider the effects of high heels over time.

Turner said high heels can cause problems because they force the foot into a naturally unstable position. “In sneakers or flat shoes, the foot is positioned in neutral where the bones of the ankle are under the bones of the lower

leg, creating a more stable joint and a decreased likelihood of injury,” she said.

“High-heeled shoes also change the normal walking or gait cycle, with the ultimate result being a less fluent gait cycle,” Turner said. She said ligament and nerve damage in the ankle could lead to issues in the legs and back. “Changes at the ankle cause the muscles higher in the leg and back to lose efficiency and strength. It also changes the load the bones in and around the knee have to absorb which can ultimately

lead to injury,” Turner said.

However, she said that there are ways to minimise the risk of injury with exercises including strengthening, stretching and balance training.

Turner, who is also the athletic training coordinator in the College of Health and Human Services at UNC Charlotte, recommended combination of the following exercises:

- **Stretching:** To stretch lower leg muscles, use a towel to pull your foot towards you for 30 seconds.

- **Strengthening:** Use a thera-

band to strengthen the big muscles of the lower leg and ankle. Use the thera-band to resist the ankle as it pushes up, out and in. To work the smaller muscles of the leg, put small objects on the floor and use your toes to pick them up.

- **Balance:** Stand on one limb at a time, holding position for 30 seconds. This may be made more difficult by closing your eyes or standing on an unstable surface.

The study was published in the *International Journal of Clinical Practice*. IANS



ALIGN YOUR LIFE

The Sleeping Direction

MANY PEOPLE ARE confused about which direction they should sleep in. Some have specific beliefs that they have to sleep in a certain direction, while some read multiple Feng Shui books and cook up vague theories about this issue. Many are superstitious about where they sleep, as they believe that sleeping in a particular direction will help them to improve their financial status. As much as I would like to believe this theory, there is no concrete proof of it. In my opinion it still remains a superstition and without any scientific merit.

So the question is – why does the direction in which one sleeps hold such significance? Many religions and cultures across the world have specific sets of beliefs that people tend to follow. However one must bear in mind that there is no Feng Shui significance attached to these.

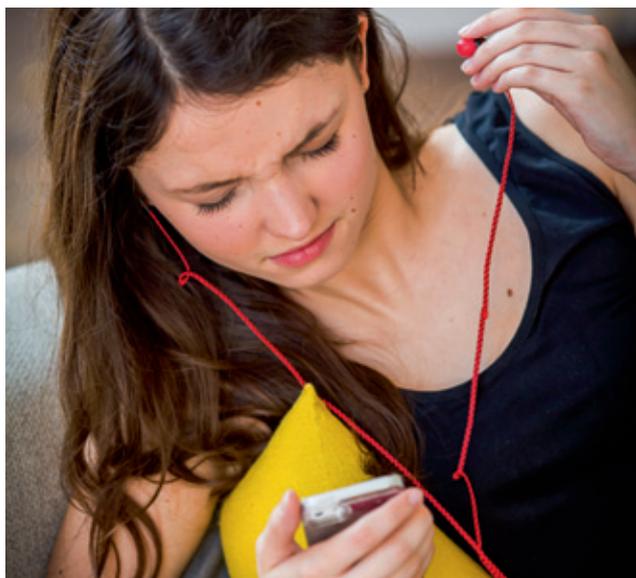
For example, Indians in general prefer to sleep facing East as they consider the direction of the rising sun to be auspicious. In Japan they believe that sleeping with the head facing the North will bring about bad luck. In South America the popular belief is to avoid sleeping facing the South as it brings about unpleasant dreams.

As opposed to the above beliefs, Feng Shui does place a great deal of emphasis on the direction in which one sleeps. As per Flying Star school of Feng Shui, the house is divided into eight sections. Based on the calculations of the property which is derived from compass direction and the year of construction, there are specific areas in the house that need to be enclosed. The energy in such areas is good for relationships as there are no distractions. Based on individual dates of births of all family members the room allocation is done. However in most cases it's not possible to have all members sleeping in a good direction. This is because the house could have a limited space or the property calculations indicate that the very few rooms have good calm energy. In such cases Feng Shui cures are recommended to reduce the impact.

It is important to remember that the calculations for a property change from one building to another. Therefore it is best not to follow any fixed Feng Shui rules. If you are already sleeping well without any stress, you are probably sleeping in your good direction already.

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How's your memory?



Smartphone addiction causes digital amnesia: Survey

EXCESSIVE USE OF smartphones and internet can kill your memory, leading to so-called “digital amnesia,” says a new survey.

According to the survey conducted by global software security group Kaspersky Lab, most of us nowadays do not think about recalling information using our memory and resort to search engines looking for quick answers.

Many users in the survey of 1,000 people were so dependent on their devices that they were worried at the thought of losing them,

WTNH Connecticut News reported.

Nearly 91 percent of the people said they use internet as an online extension of their brain. Almost half of them said their smartphone serves as their memory.

Many adults could not remember important phone numbers of family members and friends. The survey also showed that people are not doing much to protect their information online. Less than a third of the people surveyed put security precautions on their devices. IANS

