

IN Podiatrist Disputes Claims of "Toning Shoes"

In a growing trend, "toning shoes" are being sold with claims that wearers can tighten and shape their lower-body muscles just by walking in the shoes. And ads have suggested that they make the gym obsolete. But these oddly-shaped shoes have their share of medical skeptics who say there have not been legitimate, independent studies proving the benefits of these types of shoes over traditional pairs.



Dr. Bruce Williams

Although there have been small studies showing increases in muscular activity with the use of curved soles, **Dr. Bruce Williams**, a podiatrist and a past president of the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine, said: "My point is that it's not necessarily beneficial even though there's an increase in muscular activity."

For example, a person who limps may have an increase in muscular activity. "Their primary complaint at the end of the day after walking around the mall is that they hurt," Williams said. "So is that necessarily beneficial to them? No, not at all. ... I'm not a big fan of people relearning how to walk." Williams cautioned: "There are lots of claims made by manufacturers of these shoes. Everyone has to take this with a grain of salt."