

## Mail Today

# Sober down if you get high on those 'Victorian' heels

By **Neha Mathur** in New Delhi

**IF YOU** share Victoria 'Posh Spice' Beckham's habit of not being able to think straight unless you're wearing heels, you are in for a spot of trouble.

Posh's 'tower of terror' heels made news when she added five inches to her 5-foot-4-inch frame during an appearance on Sunday at the Universal Studio in Los Angeles.

But her love for sleek high heels is taking a toll on her feet. She suffers from bunions, which is a structural deformity of the bones between the bridge of the foot and the big toe.

Strutting in high heels isn't only an international phenomenon. Our divas also love their Manolo Blahniks and Christian Louboutins — Posh's favourite.

Like Posh, Malaika Arora Khan is 5 feet 4 inches tall and loves to stand tall on heels. She has a collection of over 200 high-heeled shoes from all major international brands. Her favourite is Christian Louboutin's Knotted Pumps with five-inch heels.

The French designer's collection includes two different heel categories — Very High and Total Madness.

Aishwarya Rai also sported a pair of Louboutin peep-toes with four-inch heels when she was shooting for *Pink Panther 2* in Paris.

The American Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society, though, have bad news for high heel addicts like Posh, Ash and Malaika.

A person, on an average, takes about 10,000 steps a day. If she wears high heels from 9 am to 6 pm, her forefeet have to carry the entire bodyweight, which is not what God intended them to do.

### High heels have a following in India too

Your entire feet are meant to do the job. So, a 3-inch heel creates three to six times more stress on the front of the feet, or the bones at the base of your toes, than a shoe with a modest 1-inch heel.

"Women who wear high heels run the risk of having trouble with their ankles, knees, back and the spine," said Dr Govind Singh Bisht, foot-care specialist at Max Healthcare. Women who wear heels are twice as likely as those who don't to suffer from osteoarthritis. "You can't cure osteoarthritis. All you can do is go for knee replacement," Dr Bisht says.

High heels increase the pressure on the inside of the knees by 26 per cent. Inflamed nerves and ligaments, a shortened Achilles tendon and calf muscles, hammertoes, bunions, corns and ingrown toenails are some of the other problems that the consistent use of heels can lead to.

When you walk in flats, the muscles of the lower legs and thighs contract and stretch out at the same time. When you wear shoes with high heels, your feet are pulled down as you walk.

That results in the knees, hip and lower back being in a somewhat flexed position. This prevents the muscles that cross the back of these joints from stretching out normally. High heels can also lead to lower back strain.

### SOME TIPS FOR SOLE SEARCHING

■ When you buy your heels, make sure the toe-box is broad enough so that there's no crowding of the toes.

■ The in-sole of a shoe should be soft and well-padded; the sole should be hard and have shock absorption capacity.

■ When you buy shoes, keep the width of your feet in mind. The breadth of your feet is as important as their length. Internationally, shoes in the same length category come in different widths, but in India there is no such concept.

■ Make sure you buy lightweight shoes that don't burden your body with excess baggage.



### INDIAN ACTRESSES SPORTING HEELS



Aishwarya Rai



Genelia D'Souza



Amrita Arora



**DON'T LOOK DOWN:** Victoria on her family day out