

**Recent research suggest that wearing high heels may affect the potential for a woman to conceive by Jonathan Betser.**

These reports surrounding such findings have caused some to be concerned regarding what this might be. Here are my views (-and thanks to Sue Cook (Osteopath) for her expert input!)

- Wearing high heels pushes your centre of balance forward. Therefore to compensate (and not fall over!) you have to arch your back.
- High heels also reduce the movement in your mid-foot when you're walking. This is an essential part of the foot's function and if its reduced it pre-disposes the foot to hallux valgus (bunions), degeneration (arthritis) in the toes (especially the 'great toe') and planter fasciitis (a painful condition in the sole of the foot). Very much use-it-or-lose-it. So if you're mid foot is fixed a lot (high heels), it will stiffen up.
- High heels result in the calf muscles shortening and this compromises the calf muscle pump -the way that blood is pumped into the lower limb (through the contraction and relaxation of the calf muscles). This, in theory, means that the blood has to find an alternative course and results, its been said, in varicose veins being formed.
- The altered centre of gravity and consequent 'arching' of the back (caused by wearing heels alters the tension and direction of the ligaments which hold the gynaecological organs in place (-because they 'hang down', in part, from the spine). It also alters the structure (and therefore function) of the lower spinal joints. This is where the nerve supply to the gynaecological organs arise from. In both respects, it can therefore be argued that there are potential effects on the ovaries and uterus.
- In addition, the tilting of the pelvis alters the space in which the gynaecological organs are 'housed' and this could, in theory' compromise the local blood supply.

Minimising the effect: Wear high heels at times when you're not going to be standing so much (- they aren't really a problem when you're sitting).

- Limit the height of your heels. 'Flats good, six-inch stilettos bad!!'
- (After you've had a long day in your high heels have a nice warm bath and then do some simple gentle calf stretches afterwards (holding for 20-30 seconds each time and preferably 2 lots of 3 times in each leg).
- If you're at work wearing high heels and you can occasionally slip them off without anyone noticing, do so and just gently (and slowly) stretch your feet up and down a few times every hour or so.

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