



The History of High Heels

Original Uses

- In 3500 B.C. Ancient Egypt, the first high heels were worn by butchers.
- They allowed the Egyptian butchers to be elevated enough to walk over slaughtered animals/ bloody floors, and keep their feet clean.
- The material usually consisted of a raised sole made of wood or cork.



Continued usage

- In ancient Greece and Rome they were worn by actors to make themselves look taller, and therefore more easily seen by the audience.
- In Rome specifically they were also a symbol of high social status, only the rich could afford them.



The Middle Ages

- Knights (in Persia and in Europe) wore high heels to stay on the stirrups of their horses.
- Symbol of status and wealth.
- Expensive/ fancy materials and bright colors.
- Louis XIV (5'4) wore them and popularized them with the general public, but with the decline in popularity of royals, the popularity of high heels also declined.



Women's usage

- Women's usage of the high heel began in the 18th century. The stiletto was introduced at this time, named for a stiletto dagger.
- The victorians were the people who re- popularized the heel, who believed a tiny heel was enough.
 - It was created to emphasize the tiny feminine foot, with specific focus on the instep (the arched, upper surface of the foot located between the toes and the ankle) of a woman's foot.
- Up until the 1950s, the heels on shoes were typically made of wood. However, in more recent years heels began to include a variety of materials including leather, suede, and plastic.



Current Usage

- Some of the first nude photos of women included high heels. The main reason for this was because of the altered appearance it gave women (more turned out hips, taller/ more slender, and higher butt position).
- This association and reasoning stayed with the public, which is why prostitutes often wear high heels.
- Another use for high heels is for women in the workforce, because it raises their height and combats sexism in that way, making them seem more of an 'equal' to men.



Implications

High heels for women are now so normalized that almost every woman owns one pair. However, high heels can cause numerous issues for your feet and body. Heels force your weight onto your toes and shifts your stance forward, causing back pain, and foot injuries such as plantar fasciitis and sometimes even stress fractures.

Although heels were originally made for men, the styles that evolved for women aren't practical and were started to emphasise sexual allure, not power as it was for the men.

Now, heels are slowly declining in popularity in the aftermath of the pandemic, with a more comfy style of dress emerging. When heels are reappearing it is in a more healthy style, with block heels and wedges reemerging.

My hope for our societal progress is that high heels can become a healthy symbol of power for women, as they were meant to be for men.



The background of the slide is a light cream color, decorated with a repeating pattern of small, stylized flowers in shades of pink, purple, yellow, and brown. The flowers are scattered across the entire surface, creating a delicate and charming floral theme.

THANKS!

Sources!

- <https://www.phillyvoice.com/whats-the-origin-of-the-high-heel-moore-college-art-design-fashion/>
- <https://study.com/academy/lesson/who-invented-high-heels.html>
- <https://themoderndirectory.com/education/the-history-of-high-heels/>
- <https://shoegummi.com/blogs/13-dec-2019/the-history-of-high-heels>
- <https://chiropractorinoviedo.com/blog/the-negative-effects-of-high-heels/>