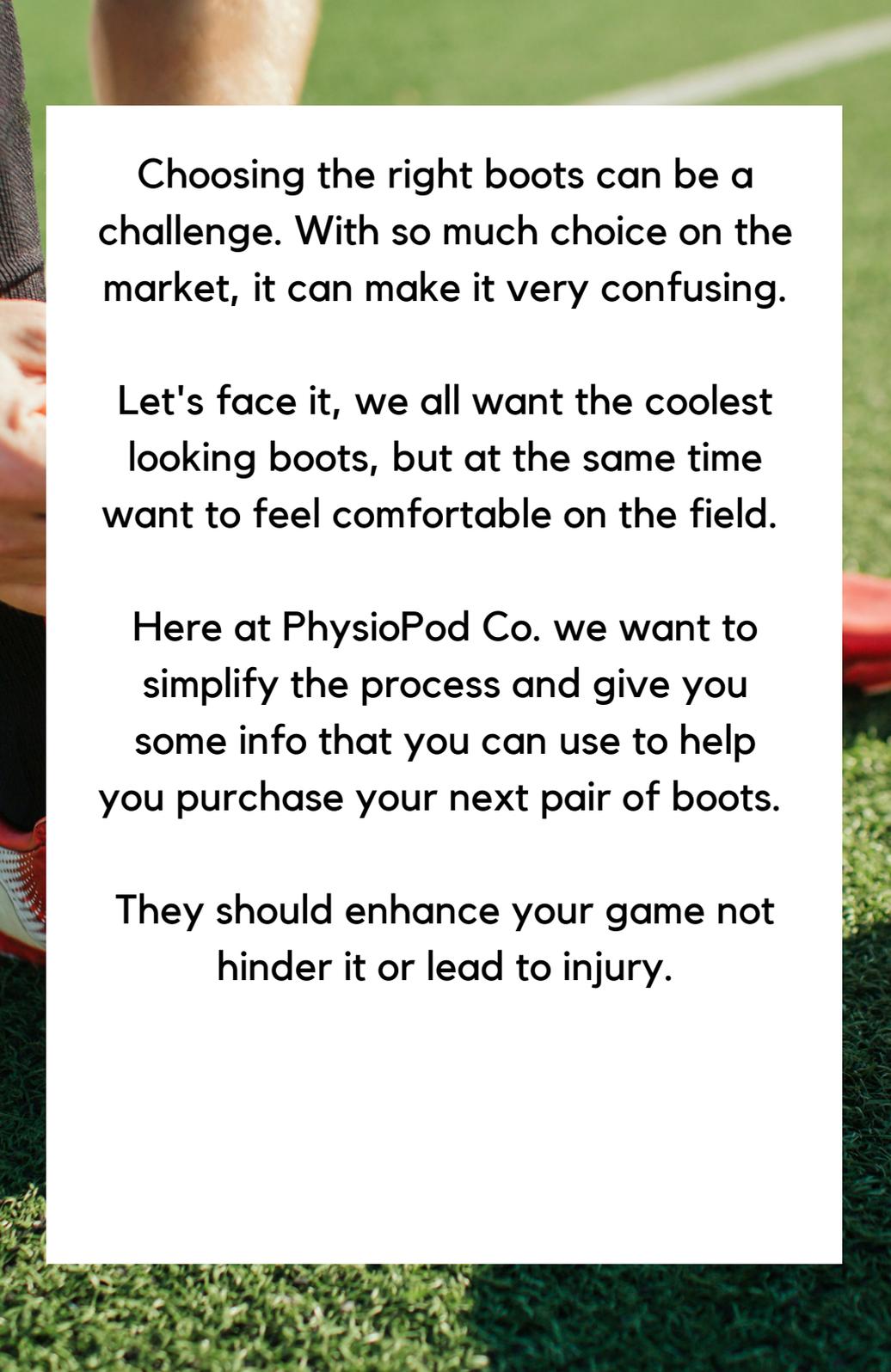


physiopod.co

Your guide to  
**better fitting  
footy boots**



footy  
foot  
pod



Choosing the right boots can be a challenge. With so much choice on the market, it can make it very confusing.

Let's face it, we all want the coolest looking boots, but at the same time want to feel comfortable on the field.

Here at PhysioPod Co. we want to simplify the process and give you some info that you can use to help you purchase your next pair of boots.

They should enhance your game not hinder it or lead to injury.

# Stuff about boots

Not all boots are the same. Brands differ greatly in their design and features.

The big name brands like Nike, Adidas, Puma etc. are all based in the Northern Hemisphere. Which means they design their boots for predominantly European and USA playing surfaces. These surfaces, unlike most of Australia, have thick grass coverage with soft dense top soil. Australian playing fields (especially now with the drought) have very little topsoil with lighter coverage of grass.

If you are lucky enough to play on a well maintained surface, then the Northern Hemisphere boots will do just fine. But for many of us weekend warriors playing on council grounds, this may not be the case.

Compared to running shoes, footy boots reduce the spread of force under your foot by 8%. This in turn increases the peak pressure of the foot by 35%. In other words, your feet take a pounding in footy boots!

With a combination of the dynamic nature of the sports, as well as fatigue, ankle sprain risk more than doubles in footy boots. Research into boots and playing surface showed a spike in ankle sprains when playing on firm/hard and artificial surfaces.

Comfort is key, with research into Football players finding that uncomfortable boots was a hindrance to performance.

Some of the key points we will take into consideration to help you find your new footy boots are:

***1. Your sport and your position***

***2. Your foot type***

***3. Kids and footy boots***

***4. The surface you play on***

***5. Your injury history***

***6. Women/Girls and footy boots***

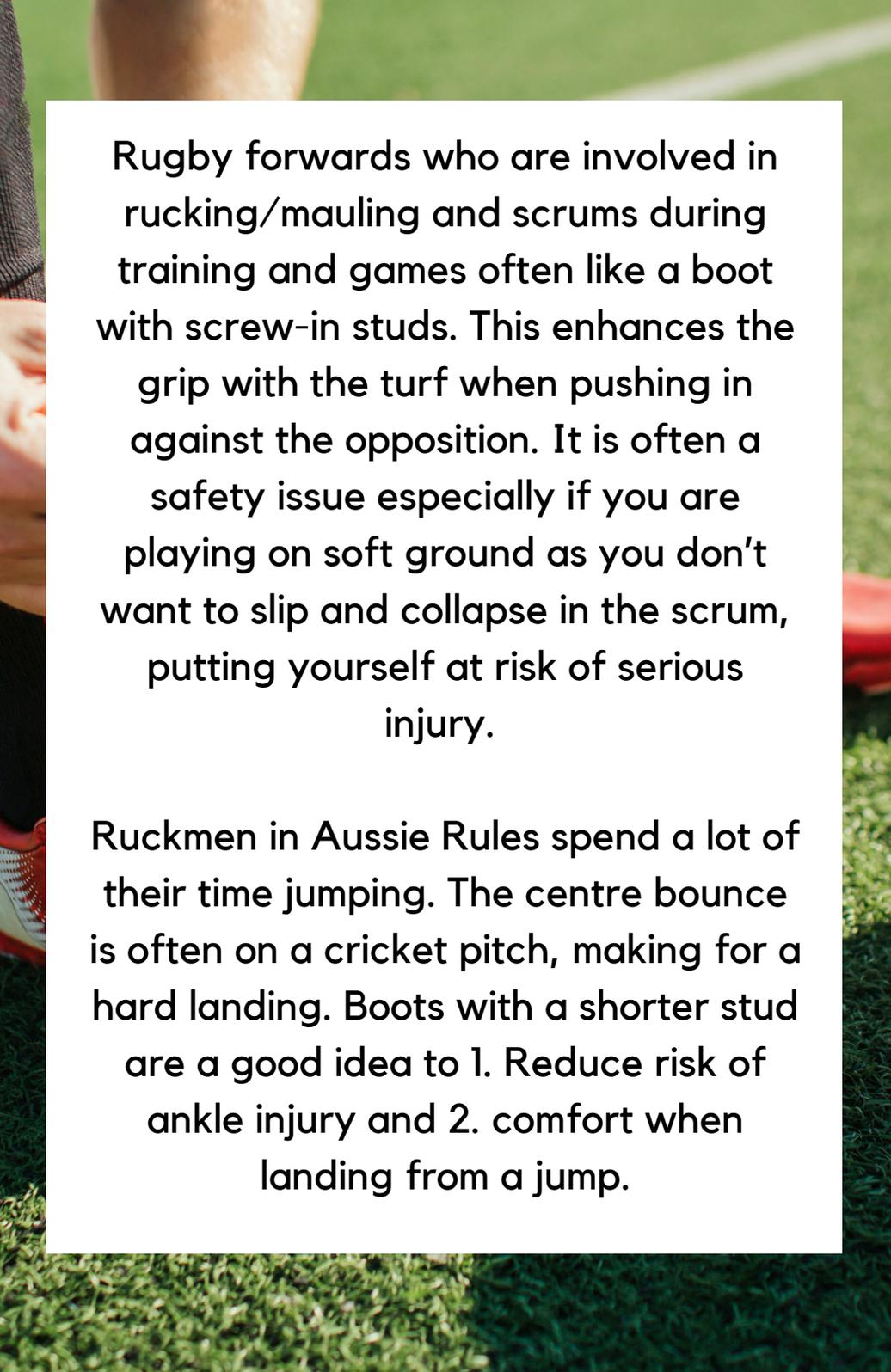
**1.**  
***What's your  
sport and  
what's  
your position?***



The footy codes are very similar in many ways. They are all played on grass (sometimes artificial), they are contact sports, they involve side stepping/cutting and there is a lot of running.

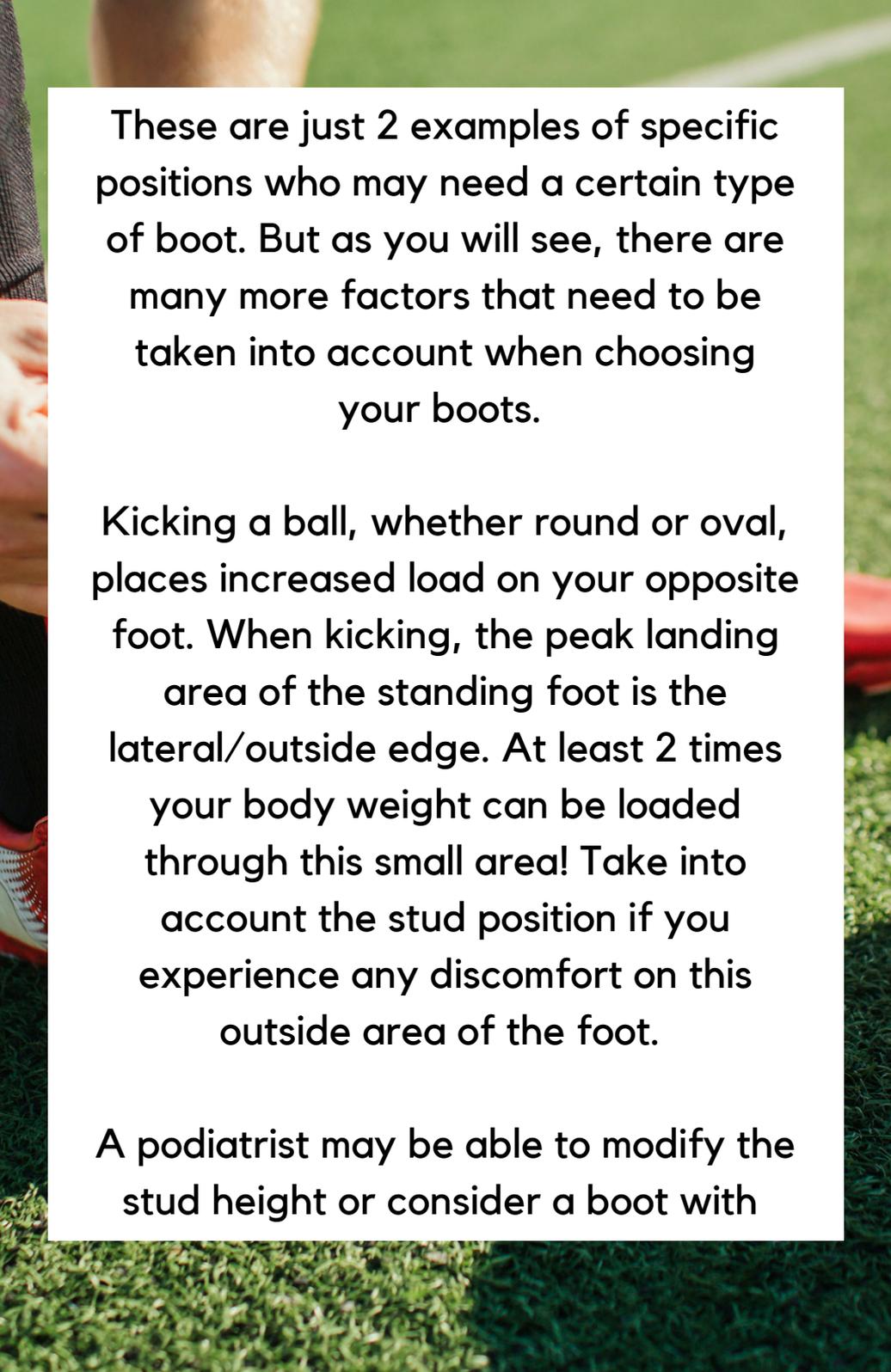
Whether you are kicking or passing the Sherrin, Gilbert or round ball, your feet might become sore at some point.

During a game you can run up to +10km depending on your position on the field. For most, that is more running in one game than you would usually run in a week! The boots on the market are generally interchangeable between the football codes, apart from a few key positions in Rugby and Aussie Rules.



Rugby forwards who are involved in rucking/mauling and scrums during training and games often like a boot with screw-in studs. This enhances the grip with the turf when pushing in against the opposition. It is often a safety issue especially if you are playing on soft ground as you don't want to slip and collapse in the scrum, putting yourself at risk of serious injury.

Ruckmen in Aussie Rules spend a lot of their time jumping. The centre bounce is often on a cricket pitch, making for a hard landing. Boots with a shorter stud are a good idea to 1. Reduce risk of ankle injury and 2. comfort when landing from a jump.

A close-up photograph of a person's lower leg and foot wearing a red and white soccer cleat on a green grass field. The text is overlaid on a white rectangular background.

These are just 2 examples of specific positions who may need a certain type of boot. But as you will see, there are many more factors that need to be taken into account when choosing your boots.

Kicking a ball, whether round or oval, places increased load on your opposite foot. When kicking, the peak landing area of the standing foot is the lateral/outside edge. At least 2 times your body weight can be loaded through this small area! Take into account the stud position if you experience any discomfort on this outside area of the foot.

A podiatrist may be able to modify the stud height or consider a boot with

blades studs. There is some evidence that the longer blade shape can reduce peak load on the foot in concentrated areas.

Unless you have a specific role on the field and want to get a little edge over your opponent, your choice of boot remains broad. However, as you will see there are other factors that may narrow your choice other than what you do on the field.



# 2.

## *What's your foot type?*



Feet are as unique as fingerprints, no two are the same. They can be wide, narrow, long, short, high and flat. So no one footy boot can fit all foot shapes.

Most players like their feet to be snug in the boot so the foot and the boot move as one. Sometimes your feet pay for that in the way of injury and blistering. Unlike running shoes, footy boots don't come in wide fittings such as 2E and 4E. However, New Balance have recently released a boot advertised as a 2E fitting called the Tekela.

As wide boots are not easily available, players need to look for other features that may improve comfort

wearing footy boots.

The 'last shape' is often an overlooked aspect of shoes in general that can help you find a better fit. The last is what the shoe companies use as their model to build the shoe around. Some have a straight last and some have a curved last. Generically a more "flatter/pronated" foot type will be better suited to a straight last shoe, while higher arch feet would feel more comfortable in a curved last shoe. If you're in-between, either will be ok.



Straight lasted



Semi-curve lasted



Curve lasted

The diagram below outlines a great way to test whether the last is straight or curved: find the tip of the shoe and see if it lines up with the centre of the heel. If so, then it is a straight last. If it lines up towards the inside of the heel, it is a curved last. All brands have models that are curved and straight, so it is a matter of checking or asking the store.



A straight last boot- better for flatter feet



A curved last boot-better for high arch feet

The upper (material on top of the shoe) is another important consideration for wide feet specifically. Natural leather or leather composite will stretch much better than synthetic plastics.

Although lighter, plastic uppers do not conform to shapes like leather does. A wider forefoot will be much more comfortable in a boot that will change shape over time, reducing the risk of blisters in particular.

Some examples of wider fitting boots:

*Puma One*

*Nike Magistra Obra*

*Asics Lethal Ultimate*

*Adidas X*

*New Balance Tekela*

**3.**

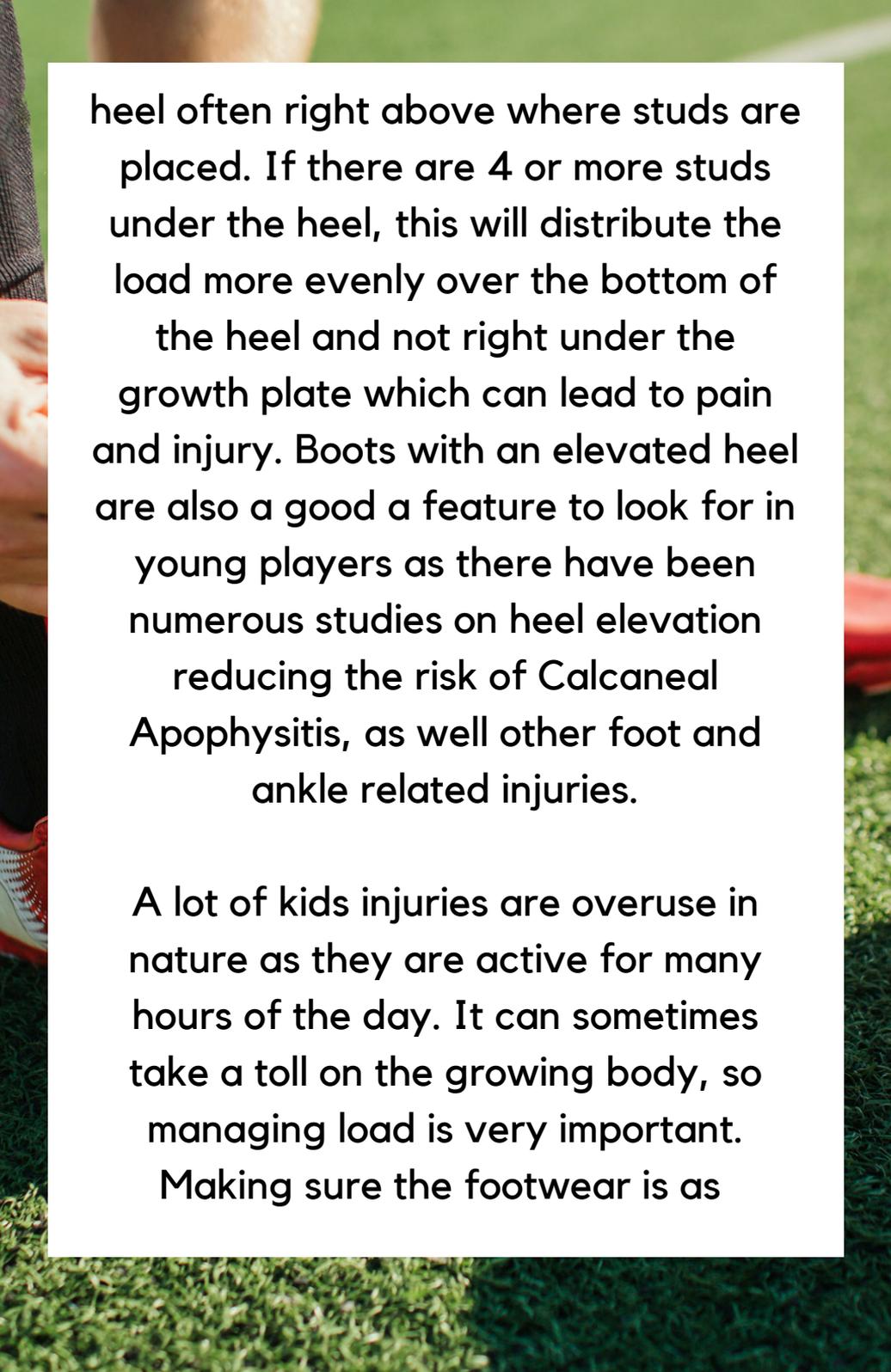
***Kids and  
footy boots.***



Kids feet are not fully formed until around their mid-teens: about 14 for girls and 16 for boys. In that time, they are vulnerable to injury and pain just as much as adults.

Probably the most common injury seen for boys and girls playing the footy codes is Calcaneal Apophysitis, also known as Sever's (heel pain). The growth plate at the back of the heel does not close until the foot is fully formed. This can cause the area to be at risk of injury from the ages of 8-16.

When choosing a boot for kids, it is important to look at the stud setup at the heel. A boot with at least 4 studs is recommended, as well as low to moderate stud height. The growth plate bisects across of back of the



heel often right above where studs are placed. If there are 4 or more studs under the heel, this will distribute the load more evenly over the bottom of the heel and not right under the growth plate which can lead to pain and injury. Boots with an elevated heel are also a good a feature to look for in young players as there have been numerous studies on heel elevation reducing the risk of Calcaneal Apophysitis, as well other foot and ankle related injuries.

A lot of kids injuries are overuse in nature as they are active for many hours of the day. It can sometimes take a toll on the growing body, so managing load is very important. Making sure the footwear is as

appropriate as possible will further  
minimise injury risk and enhance  
enjoyment.

Examples of boots appropriate for kids:

*Asics Kids range*

*X Blades Kids range*

*Nike Phantom, Tiempo*

*Adidas Predator*

**4.**

***What type  
of surface  
do you play  
on?***

There are 3 categories of boots to suit  
3 different types of surfaces;

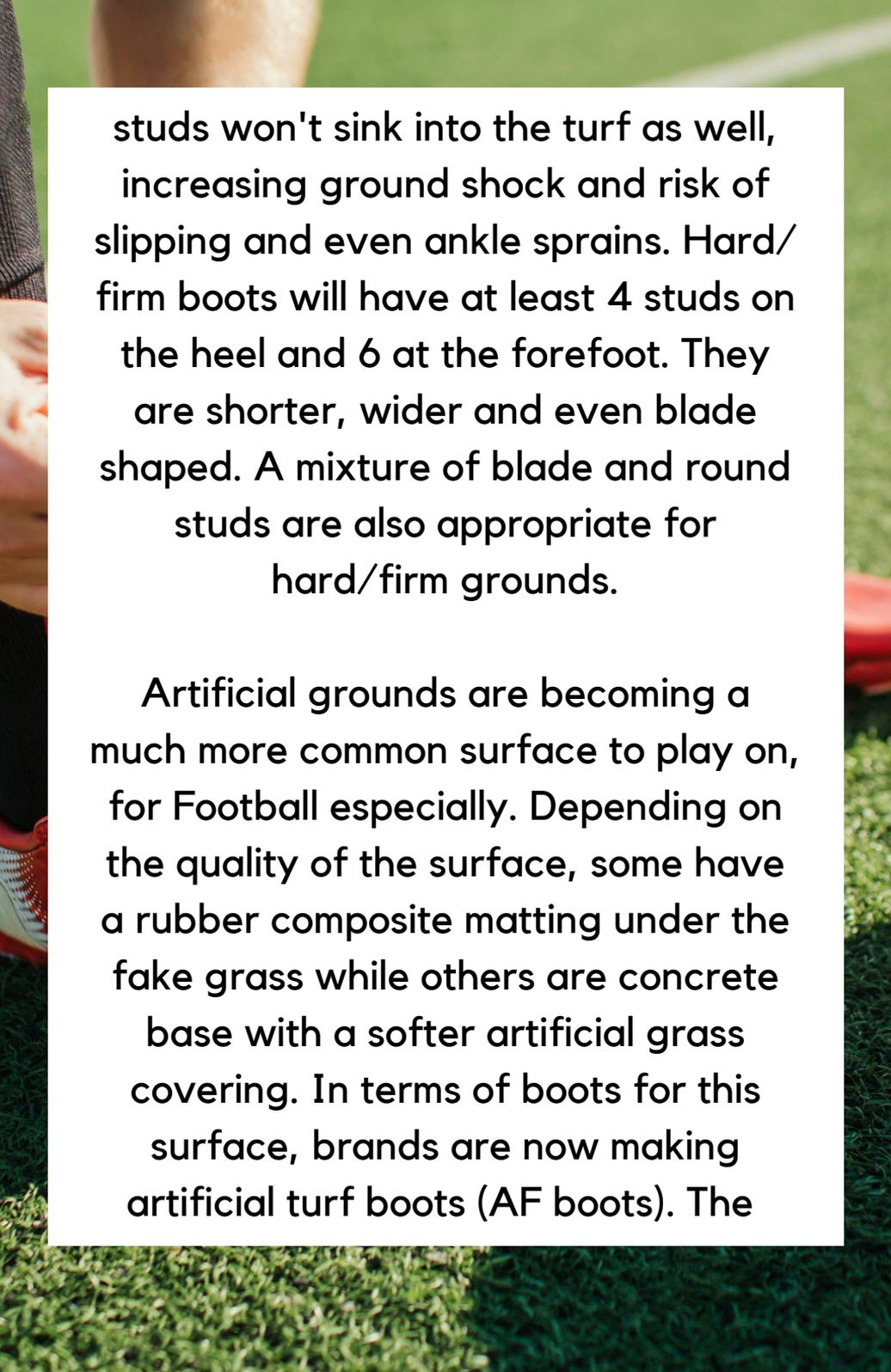
Artificial

Hard/firm

Soft

Soft boots are made for grounds that have good grass coverage and soft topsoil. These boots have fewer stud numbers and are longer and narrower in height. All designed to give the player as much stability through the studs sinking into the turf.

Hard/firm boots are the most common boot on the market and the most common grounds seen across Australia. Grounds can have a good coverage of grass however the soil is firm to hard. Therefore longer, thinner



studs won't sink into the turf as well, increasing ground shock and risk of slipping and even ankle sprains. Hard/firm boots will have at least 4 studs on the heel and 6 at the forefoot. They are shorter, wider and even blade shaped. A mixture of blade and round studs are also appropriate for hard/firm grounds.

Artificial grounds are becoming a much more common surface to play on, for Football especially. Depending on the quality of the surface, some have a rubber composite matting under the fake grass while others are concrete base with a softer artificial grass covering. In terms of boots for this surface, brands are now making artificial turf boots (AF boots). The

stud height is shorter than a hard/firm surface boot while the stud distribution is almost double. Many may find this type of boot useful if the natural turf is especially dry since many areas have been going through a long drought.

Examples of soft turf boots:

*Adidas Nemziz, Menace*

*Nike Mercurial*

*Asics Lethal Tight 5 (rugby forward),  
Tigror ST*

Examples of hard/firm turf boots:

*Asics Lethal Ultimate, Testimonial*

*Nike Tiempo*

*Adidas Predator*

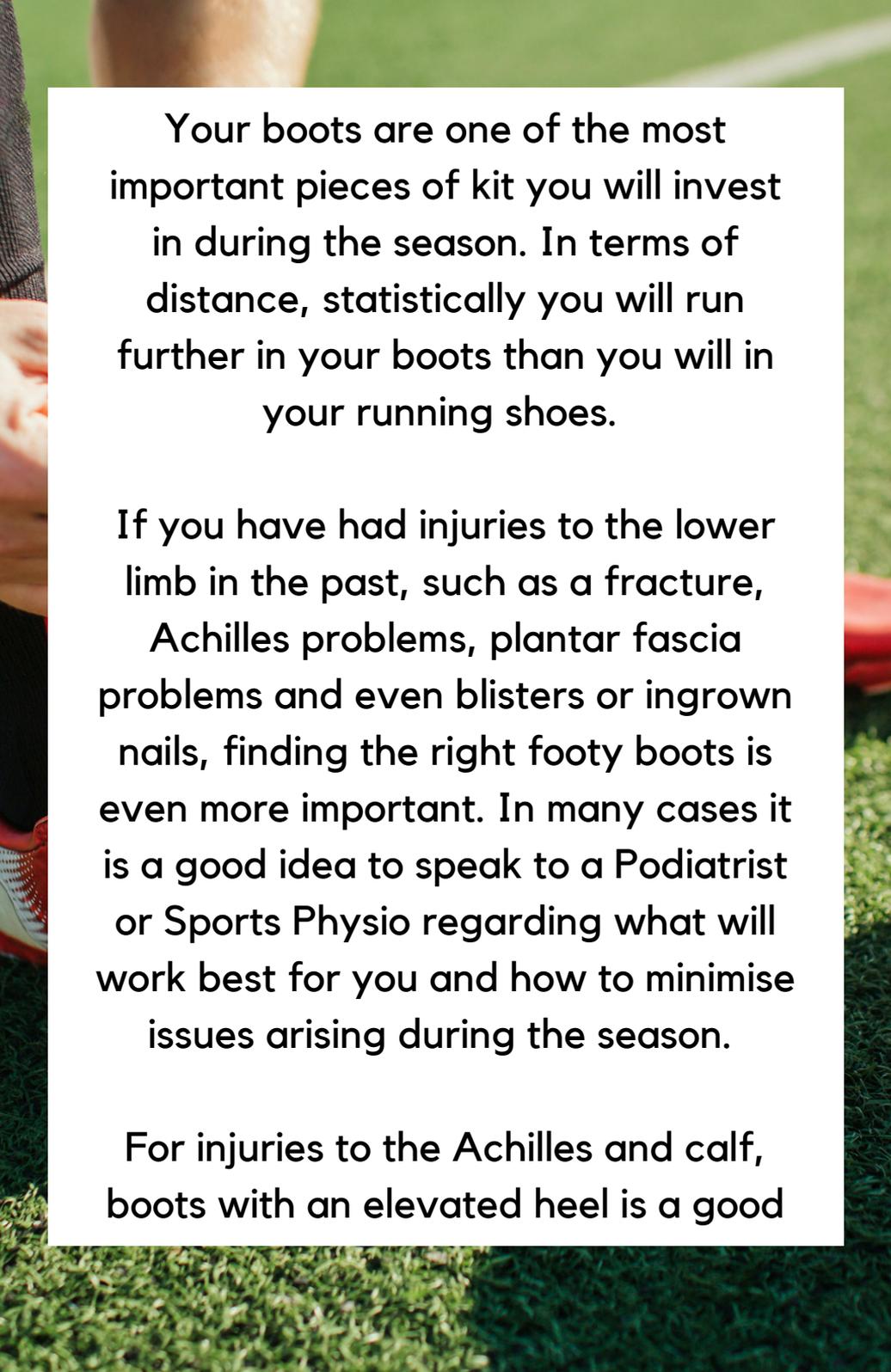
*Puma One*

*New Balance Furon*

**5.**

***What's your  
injury  
history?***

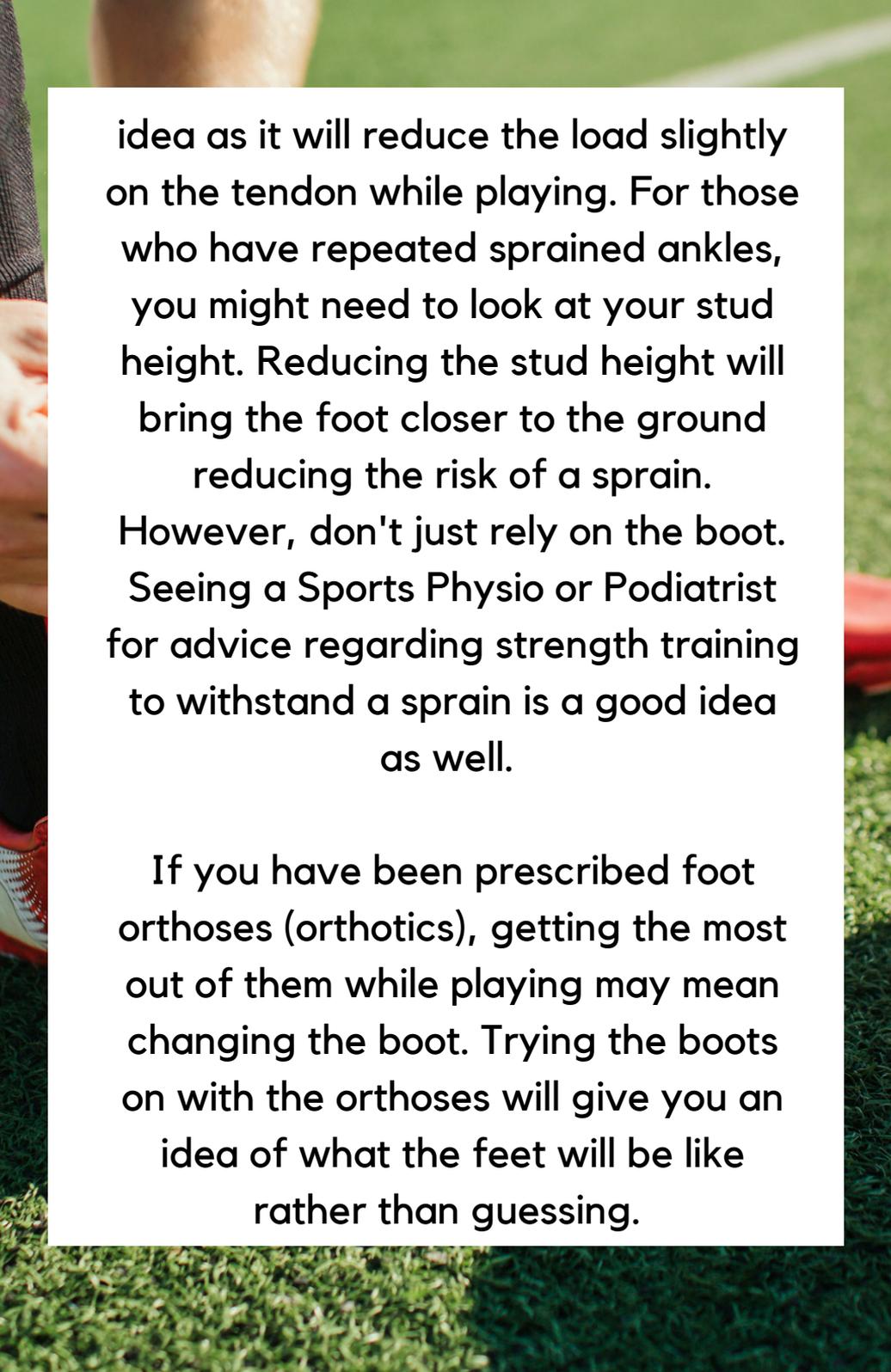




Your boots are one of the most important pieces of kit you will invest in during the season. In terms of distance, statistically you will run further in your boots than you will in your running shoes.

If you have had injuries to the lower limb in the past, such as a fracture, Achilles problems, plantar fascia problems and even blisters or ingrown nails, finding the right footy boots is even more important. In many cases it is a good idea to speak to a Podiatrist or Sports Physio regarding what will work best for you and how to minimise issues arising during the season.

For injuries to the Achilles and calf, boots with an elevated heel is a good



idea as it will reduce the load slightly on the tendon while playing. For those who have repeated sprained ankles, you might need to look at your stud height. Reducing the stud height will bring the foot closer to the ground reducing the risk of a sprain.

However, don't just rely on the boot. Seeing a Sports Physio or Podiatrist for advice regarding strength training to withstand a sprain is a good idea as well.

If you have been prescribed foot orthoses (orthotics), getting the most out of them while playing may mean changing the boot. Trying the boots on with the orthoses will give you an idea of what the feet will be like rather than guessing.

Frequent pain and discomfort under the feet may be a pressure/cushioning issue. A boot with a thicker midsole may help, as well as finding a boot with a higher number of studs to distribute the pressure across the foot.

Trouble with blisters, ingrown nails and numbness are most of the time related to tight fitting boots. Going for a wider fit or softer leather upper will help. Also a lacing techniques on the boot can be implemented to remove unwanted pressure/tightness on the foot.



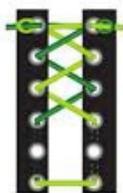
Lock Lacing



Loop Lacing Lock



High-Instep Lacing



Wide Forefoot Lacing

If foot is slipping

If foot is tight

6.

# *Women/girls and footy boots.*





Participation of women and girls in the footy codes is growing every year.

With the popularity of AFLW, W League and 7s Rugby, boot brands are going to need to cater for the growing numbers.

Until recently, women and girls have had to wear male boots. The female and male foot vary significantly due to changes in anatomical structures, biomechanics and physiological changes (hormones). Where possible, women and girls should try to wear a female designed boot.

Female boots are now narrower with specific sizing, as well as a smaller stud design. Even though female boots now have specific design features,

what has been discussed above still needs to be taken into account when purchasing boots. Remember comfort is key.

Boots now available with female-specific design include:

IDA Sports

*Adidas Ace and X*

*Asics Leathal Tigreor*

*X Blades Jet*

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