

How the heel got its height

Marilyn Monroe in high heels is the embodiment of a certain version of femininity — *dainty*, sexualized and uncomfortable, with limited mobility, and *pandering* to the male gaze.

dainty 美味的; 优雅的

pander 迎合; 勾引

High heels were, in fact, originally designed for men — and had an *immensely* practical purpose. Soldiers on horseback wore them in tenth-century *Persia*. The heel helped keep them stable as they stood up in their stirrups and took aim at enemies with bows and arrows. Yet from the mid-17th century, heels became associated with supposedly “feminine” qualities, and so became women’s wear.

immensely 极其地; 非常地

Persia 波斯

Until the mid-20th century heels were *chunky*, *clunky* things. After the Second World War, techniques and materials used in aircraft engineering were applied to shoes, creating the stiletto.

chunky 矮胖的

clunky 沉重的; 笨拙的

Shoemakers and wearers have searched *doggedly* for a heel that is both high and comfortable. Joan Oloff, a *podiatrist*-turned-shoe-designer, makes footwear lined with memory *foam* to absorb the shock of each painful step. Sandra Gault has developed an app to create 3D images of your feet, which can be used to create perfectly fitting shoes. And growing numbers of companies make shoes with adjustable heels: two inches for the *boardroom*, four for the nightclub, none for the schlep home.

doggedly 顽固地

podiatrist 足科医生

foam 泡沫

boardroom 会议室

For those looking for cheaper options, *myriad* hacks exist. Taping your third and fourth toes together gets good reviews. The *wisest* are stepping down altogether: in 2016, for the first time, more British women bought trainers than heels.

myriad 无数的

wisest 聪明的