

# SOLE-MATES: WOMEN AND THEIR SHOES

Welcome to the WWLS summit. Are you up for some sole-searching?



*"My husband suspects that I have a thing for you. I know because he's mentioned it a few times. But I always brush it off. How do I tell the man I love that sometimes when I leave him at home, I end up just standing outside your window, gazing upon you with such longing. You complete me. I think of us together. Walking together. Going places. Spending time. I want to be the only woman for you. I don't want to go anywhere without you. If that's not infidelity, I don't know what is." (Confession of a Woman Who Loves Shoes or WWLS).*

Is that a teardrop I see dangling from your bottom eyelashes? That could only mean that you're a believer. A fellow fan. A shoe zealot! Welcome to a conference of **Women Who Love Shoes (WWLS)**. Don't be bashful; you've come to the right place. Please note that this is not rehab for the shoe addict, nor is it boot camp (hmmm, *boot camp* doesn't sound too bad though). No one here desires anonymity. This is a safe place where WWLS articulate their affections towards their *sole-mates*. These affairs are not illicit but they can be fraught with challenges. Like all other relationships, there's a little pain and discomfort from time to time.

**WWLS Membership requirements:** Walk with your love of shoes. Your collection does not have to rival that of Carrie Bradshaw and Imelda Marcos, and you don't need to brandish Jimmy Choo, Manolo Blahnik, or Prada to prove your commitment.

**Order of business at this sitting:** Compose a shoe-lovers' missive to the masses, one worthy of being proclaimed from the top of the heels.

Here goes.

## **Women love shoes because....**

### **Shoes raise their sexy quotient**

Heels lengthen legs to the brink of forever, flats flatter otherwise drab outfits, and boots keep bringing sexy back. 82% of the men I asked said a woman's footwear made a difference to her appearance. That puts the double takes and appreciative glances into perspective. Doesn't it? Therefore, every shoe purchased can secure more double takes and appreciative glances! So WWLS keep shoe shopping because they love the return on investment.

### **Shoes give them the opportunity to exercise their right to choose.**

Women's lib meant freedom across the board. WWLS need shoe options for all occasions, for all outfits and, of course, to complement all their accessories. They need sneakers for the gym, sandals for that casual *lime*, stiletto heels for a night out, pumps for the office. Plus they can't wear the same shoes everyday —experts have advised against it. And then they have to consider trends. *Phew...* it's not easy to keep it all together, but someone's got to do it, and WWLS are just humble volunteers. So don't hate. Appreciate.

### **Shoes put them in a position of power:**

Once upon a time, shoes were significant status symbols; the wealthy wore high heels, to stand apart. According to Helen Fisher, professor of anthropology, "Like most animals, we're wired to associate height with power... High heels can literally raise your status because you're taller when you wear them." I'm sure some shorter women can identify here.

Fisher also made an important point concerning the power of heels: "When a woman wears them, she assumes a primal mating pose called lordosis... Her butt lifts, and her back arches." And then... men respond!

### **Happy feet make happy women:**

After a 15lb weight gain you're probably not as motivated to go shopping for clothes. But you can still go shoe shopping. Your feet are still size 8 1/2, so no sales attendant can say, "That won't fit you" just based on her obnoxious head-to-toe survey of you.

Brand expert and author, Martin Lindstrom, says that shoe shopping activates the brain's prefrontal cortex, or the 'collecting spot'. Men collect cars, electronics and whatever else; women collect shoes, among other things. Lindstrom pointed out that during shopping, "The neurotransmitter dopamine is released, providing a feel-good high, similar to taking a drug." So WWLS get high on shoes.

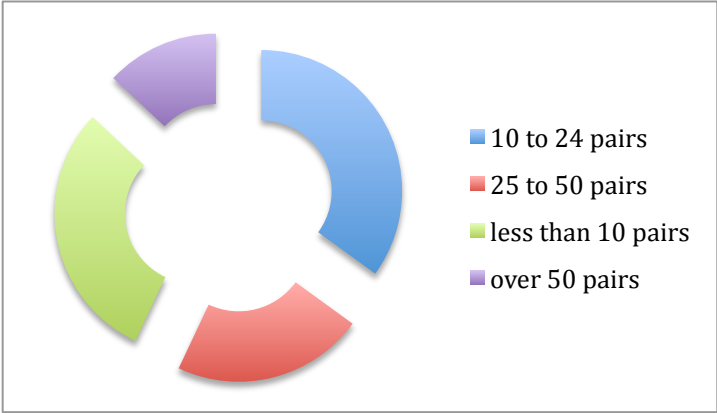
### **Shoes speak louder than words**

A woman's shoe collection speaks volumes about her -- some tell of her profession, others hint at her personality and so on. Public speaking is footwear's forte. Are you confident enough to step aside and let your shoes do the talking? The WWLS have reached that stage.

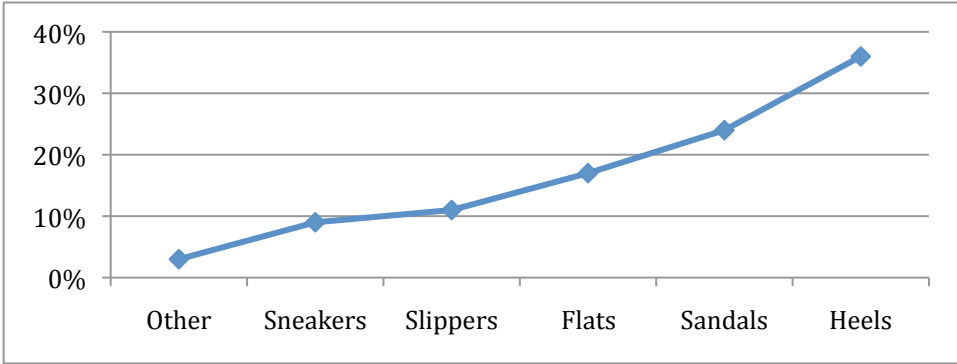
Finito! Missive done! You're welcomed to be part of this growing movement. But first, invest in a sturdy shoe rack!

Results based on a sample of 220 Caribbean women:

*Pairs of footwear they own:*



*Their favourite footwear:*



*Our sample's preferred indulgences:*

