

Stride Into 2013: Breaking the Platform Habit

Lynn Yaeger, Vogue, January 3rd 2013

You've spent the last decade clomping, somehow managing to convince yourself that when you don your cherished platforms—so reliable, so comfy—you are, in your own way, sort of gliding. You are not.

Amazonian footwear may have its virtues, but delicacy and grace are not among them. So you would think, then, that the news that thin-soled shoes with a quiet elegance fit for a sylph were wafting their way into wardrobes this season would be universally met with at least measured enthusiasm. But "no!" you declare, clinging ever more tightly to your clunkers as you galumph through life. Change is hard! To allay your fears and help you navigate these sole shoals, we've solicited advice from a roster of eminent shoe designers to encourage you to climb down from your plateau and embrace the incredible lightness of the thinner-soled shoe.

Keep a Sense of Proportion "Single soles have a daintier feel and enhance female curves in the legs and calf area," says Jimmy Choo creative director Sandra Choi. "Skinny pants, ankle lengths, or a sharp, slick silhouette could all be a part of the look." And Zoraide's Paola Bay thinks thinner-soled shoes are better proportioned for the female physique. "The platform tends to enlarge the lower end of our bodies," she says. **Learn to Walk the Walk** "I only make single-sole shoes," declares Manolo Blahnik. "They transform the way a woman walks: in heavy platforms like truck drivers, in my shoes like ballerinas." Choi admits that the promise of appearing taller may rest in the platform's camp, but this shortcoming can be overcome by developing the ability to stride gracefully (practise!) in whatever heel height—and sole—you choose.

Never Underestimate the Power of Restrained Sex Ap-

peal According to Bruno Frisoni, who designs his own line in addition to being the creative director of Roger Vivier, "There is something animal in the [single-sole] look—you feel the curve of the foot." **Bay states, frankly that "men really don't like platforms—they find them totally unsexy. For them, even a kitten heel would be better,"** while Choi believes the hottest look to be a thinner sole combined with a great high heel, which throws the arch of the foot outward. She urges courage: "Don't give in just because you miss the height and comfort!"

Consult the Historical Record Frisoni reminds us that more slender shoes can make you look like a cinematic heroine: "If you consider the stiletto," he says, "it's the perfect proportion. I think it makes you even more feminine, as in the fifties and sixties—Tippi Hedren with a wide, knee-length coat and a stiletto."

Take a Deep Breath "Going from a platform to a more refined single sole is just a matter of habit," reassures Sergio Rossi's Francesco Russo. Max Kibardin suggests that though it's fine to experiment with different styles in the evening, "the urban thin-soled shoes give women a more appropriate everyday look."

If All Else Fails If all of the above has still not convinced you, one designer dares to answer the unspoken question: Do my shoes make me look fat? According to Tabitha Simmons, "I feel that when your shoe is big and clunky, you can look a bit heavier."

