High Heels to Blame

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To the Editor:

The report on the Stiletto Award that Manolo Blahnik received from the Council of Fashion Designers of America ("Talking the High-Heel Walk," Feb. 8) quotes the recipient as denouncing as "really absurd nonsense" claims that high heels cause deformed feet and back pain. In fact, for more than 250 years physicians have warned of the deleterious impact of high heels. Orthopedic foot surgeons and podiatrists have long known that the fact that they perform 90 percent of all forefoot surgery on women is overwhelmingly associated with the kinds of shoes that millions of women wear: pointy-toed and high-heeled.

Heels and narrow-toe, boxed shoes cause progressive foot ligament and joint injury that, over a period of years, leaves many women unable to walk without pain. Surgical treatment of these hobbled feet, estimated at 300,000 new cases annually in the United States, never restores them to normal.

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