

## Japanese women rebel against high heels

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Women across Japan are fed up with having to wear high-heeled shoes to work. One woman is so fed up that she started a movement to end the requirement for female employees to wear the shoes. The movement has the hashtag KuToo. This is a combination of the Japanese words "kutsu" (which means shoe) and "kutsuu" (which is the Japanese word for pain). The movement was started by Japanese actress Yumi Ishikawa. She tweeted about her belief that employers in Japan should not require female workers to wear high heels. Ms Ishikawa also launched an online petition. It asks Japan's Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare to forbid employers from requiring women to wear certain types of shoes.

Ishikawa's tweet is now spreading across other parts of Asia. Many women in China and South Korea have started their own campaigns against having to wear high heels. Ishikawa told TIME magazine: "I thought that if there are so many people who feel the same as me, why not start some sort of movement." Many women supported Ishikawa on social media. They complained about sore feet, bleeding heels, back pain and other health issues. A visually impaired woman in her 20s who has to wear high heels at work said it is difficult for her to keep her balance and not fall over. A recent survey found that over 70 per cent of women working in Tokyo wear high heels to work at least once a week.

Sources: [time.com](http://time.com) / [nippon.com](http://nippon.com) / [japantoday.com](http://japantoday.com)

### Writing

People should be able to wear what they want at their place of work. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

women / Japan / movement / combination / words / pain / actress / belief / employers shoes / Asia / campaigns / social media / sore feet / heels / balance / once a week

### True / False

- a) A woman in Japan started a movement against wearing high heels. T / F
- b) The hashtag #KuToo is a combination of two Japanese words. T / F
- c) The woman is a politician. T / F
- d) The woman petitioned Japan's government about employers. T / F
- e) The article says the woman's tweet has spread across South America. T / F
- f) The woman spoke to TIME magazine about her feelings. T / F
- g) The article said women complained about bleeding toes. T / F
- h) A survey said women in Tokyo wear high heels at least twice a week. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. <b>fed up</b>      | a. opinion       |
| 2. <b>movement</b>    | b. protested     |
| 3. <b>combination</b> | c. prohibit      |
| 4. <b>belief</b>      | d. mixture       |
| 5. <b>forbid</b>      | e. circulating   |
| 6. <b>spreading</b>   | f. tired of      |
| 7. <b>feel</b>        | g. backed        |
| 8. <b>supported</b>   | h. questionnaire |
| 9. <b>complained</b>  | i. campaign      |
| 10. <b>survey</b>     | j. believe       |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of high heels?
- b) Why do companies require women to wear high heels?
- c) Have you ever been fed up with your shoes?
- d) Should high heels have a health warning?
- e) Are employers who require women to wear high heels bad?
- f) Have you ever signed an online petition?
- g) What advice do you have for women who have to wear heels?
- h) What three adjectives best describe high heels?

## Phrase Match

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. Women across Japan are fed               | a. employees           |
| 2. female                                   | b. least once a week   |
| 3. the Japanese word                        | c. types of shoes      |
| 4. should not require female workers        | d. feet                |
| 5. requiring women to wear certain          | e. other parts of Asia |
| 6. Ishikawa's tweet is now spreading across | f. her balance         |
| 7. there are so many people who             | g. to wear high heels  |
| 8. complained about sore                    | h. feel the same as me |
| 9. it is difficult for her to keep          | i. for pain            |
| 10. wear high heels to work at              | j. up                  |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What was the person who invented high heels thinking?
- Why don't men wear high heels?
- What are the dangers of high heels?
- Are high heels worth the pain?
- Should all workers wear the most comfortable footwear?
- How can a company ask a visually impaired woman to wear heels?
- What questions would you like to ask Ms Ishikawa?

## Spelling

- a movement to end the quemerneirt
- This is a ocniaitmobn
- eeruqri female workers
- launched an online pneitiot
- forbid pemryseol
- wear critnea types of shoes
- started their own capnigsam
- on social maied
- A luavlsyi impaired woman
- keep her calaben
- A cnetre survey
- at slaet once a week

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. i	3. d	4. a	5. c
6. e	7. j	8. g	9. b	10. h

## Role Play

### Role A – High Heels

You think high heels are the best shoes. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their shoes. Also, tell the others which are the worst of these (and why): rain boots, slippers or flip-flops.

### Role B – Rain Boots

You think rain boots are the best shoes. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their shoes. Also, tell the others which are the worst of these (and why): high heels, slippers or flip-flops.

### Role C – Slippers

You think slippers are the best shoes. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their shoes. Also, tell the others which are the worst of these (and why): rain boots, high heels or flip-flops.

### Role D – Flip-Flops

You think flip-flops are the best shoes. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their shoes. Also, tell the others which are the worst of these (and why): rain boots, slippers or high heels.

## Speaking – Footwear

Rank these with your partner. Put the best footwear at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| • sandals       | • high heels    |
| • loafers       | • jogging shoes |
| • lace-up shoes | • rain boots    |
| • flip-flops    | • slippers      |

### Answers – True False

a T	b T	c F	d T	e F	f T	g F	h F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.