

# Winnipeg Free Press

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## Everybody's walkin'

It's spring strolling weather, but you don't have to sacrifice style or comfort

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I thought the day would never come when the sidewalks would finally be free of ice and snow -- and now I feel like I'm making up for lost time by strolling around the city at every opportunity, just like pretty much every other Winnipegger.

Which brings me to the age-old question -- function or fashion? Let's face it, while strappy sandals and funky wedges look fantastic, they aren't always practical when out for a walk. One could argue trainers are the way to go, but they're kind of lacking in style.

The question of fashion or function becomes even more challenging if you have to factor in things like walking aids or sticks -- which are, let's face it, pretty clinical-looking.

I was recently introduced to two fashionable and functional lines catering to both challenges: Pluggz, comfortable and stylish walking shoes; and Top & Derby, sleek, architecturally designed canes.

According to the people at Pluggz, their shoes are designed with proprietary technology that allows the Earth's electrons to be absorbed through the soles of the shoe, making it feel as if you are walking on soft sand or grass, which can make you feel more balanced, energized and with fewer aches and pains.

Pluggz are also great for the style-conscious soul. Their collection of casual ballet flats feature floral cut-out leather in fun, bright colours -- perfect for spring.

For those looking for something a little dressier, there is also a collection of classic ballet flats in rich metallic tones with contrasting patent leather toe caps.

Top & Derby is a Winnipeg company determined to bring the walking stick, which has gone from being stylishly crafted to cold and utilitarian, back to its glory days as a fashion accessory.

The Chatfield walking stick at Top & Derby is simple and sleek. It features a smooth, silicone-coated handle in three shades -- Lights-Out Black, Crybaby Blue and On-the-Vine Red -- paired with a rich, black walnut shaft that tapers at the bottom.

What I like about these walking sticks is that they are not over-the-top and garish, but streamlined and sophisticated, making them ideal for all ages -- from your grandparents to your friend who just had foot surgery or that injured ball player stuck in a boot.

For more information on these sensible style options you can check out [www.pluggz.com](http://www.pluggz.com) and [www.topandderby.com](http://www.topandderby.com).

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