

Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists  
**Product Recognition Program**

**Parsons Elastic Laces**



Available online at [www.caot.ca/prp](http://www.caot.ca/prp)





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The conclusions presented in the current report are derived from the best information available. In the case that new information becomes available and grants a modification to the conclusions, CAOT reserves the right to update and issue a new report of this product at any time.

### Acknowledgement

The generation of this report would not have been possible without the contribution of occupational therapists and members of the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT).



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## Executive Summary

*Parsons Elastic Laces* are shoelaces that allow shoes to be pre-tied and then slipped on or off. They also allow for the shoe to expand to accommodate a slight variation of feet swelling without restricting blood circulation. Reviewers were unanimous in recommending that the *Parsons Elastic Laces* be accepted for CAOT's Product Recognition Program. Information and recommendations regarding the performance and usage of the product are provided in this report.



Parsons Elastic Laces are recognized by CAOT.



## Review report

### The purpose of this product

*Parsons Elastic Laces* are shoelaces that allow shoes to be pre-tied and then slipped on or off. They also allow for the shoe to expand to accommodate a slight variation of feet swelling without restricting blood circulation. Each package includes 2 pairs of laces, and laces are available in 4 different lengths: 18, 24, 30 or 37 inches. These laces are ideal for individuals seeking more independence in putting on their shoes.

### Performance of the product (efficacy, usability, safety, reliability, durability)

- The *Parsons Elastic Laces* look very similar to regular shoelaces and they can replace the standard shoelaces on any shoe. For users, the look of the shoes is “normal”, and the laces allows users to continue wearing their usual footwear.
- The product is elastic and can accommodate for the presence of slight swelling of feet. With the elastic laces, laced shoes can be converted to a slip on. Having the laces in place may thus help to increase user comfort and allow for easier mobility.
- The presence of a soft shoe tongue makes it more challenging to put on the shoe; this can be improved with the use of a reacher to hold the tongue.
- The shoe opening may be too narrow once the elastic laces are in place, making sliding the foot in more difficult. The back of the shoe is often crushed when the user slips his foot inside the shoe because the shoe opening is more restricted with the elastic laces. The use of a shoe horn may help to reduce this issue.
- This product is useful for a wide range of users, including those who have difficulty in bending or cannot reach their feet to put on their shoes, decreased flexion of the hips or knees, medical contraindications (cannot bend) or decreased dexterity (i.e. with this product they only have to have the laces tied once).
- This product is also useful and may improve safety for users who are unable to regularly tie their laces (or who find this task difficult and constraining and therefore choose not to tie their laces) and who may therefore increase their risk of falls (due to laces untied, shoes not tight on the feet, etc.).
  - In the event that a user is not capable of tying their laces, the product may have to be installed by someone else. Once installed, tightness of knot may have to verified or adjusted occasionally.
- There are no written instructions, but an image appears on the product information sheet and is sufficient in demonstrating how to use the product. It would be useful for the manufacturer’s product information to recommend the length of the laces according to the number of eyelets on the shoes to make the best choice for the lengths of laces.
- If installed properly (not too loose for the shoe to fall off) then there should be no safety issues associated with this product. There were no safety issues addressed by the manufacturer.
- The laces appear robust and well made. However, with time and wear, the laces may break.
- One reviewer stated, “Of the different brands of elastic shoe laces I have tried with clients, this brand is my preferred as the knot stays tied and they have a good amount of stretch”.



## Important recommendations

Elastic laces may cause the opening of the shoe to be narrower than usual, making it more difficult to slide the foot into certain types of shoes (depending on fabric, structural stability, etc.). This can result in the back of the shoe being crushed. To avoid these issues, other assistive devices can be used in combination with the elastic laces.

For example, a reacher could be used to hold up the tongue of the shoes. A shoe horn could help to eliminate any damage to the back of the shoe.

## Economic considerations

All reviewers felt that the *Parsons Elastic Laces* were good value for money. Reviewers reported that the price is only slightly more expensive than standard laces. Reviewers reported that generally, Parsons products are available through several local vendors, and if they do not have the product in stock it can be ordered within 2 weeks. The product can also be ordered online. Customer service contact information is accessible on the website, which is provided on the product tag.

## Scientific evidence

A literature search was conducted but no scientific publications related to the use of elastic laces were found.

## Review committee

The *Parsons Elastic Laces* were reviewed by 3 occupational therapists with diverse backgrounds, expertise and experience. The first reviewer has 19 years of experience as an occupational therapist, working with geriatric, stroke, and Parkinson's populations, both in inpatient rehabilitation and community rehabilitation settings. Throughout her practice, she has trained clients with the use of many assistive devices for basic ADLs, as well as IADLs. She also has taught a course related to occupational therapy and older adults in a university program. The second reviewer is an occupational therapist who has worked in the field for over 25 years. She currently is a sole charge occupational therapist in a small town, who works with people of all ages, with various diagnoses and in various settings. The third reviewer has also cumulated more than 25 years of practice, in the private practice sector specifically. Her clientele regularly requires home adaptations and modifications in order to maintain their participation in daily occupations.



## Final recommendation

Reviewers were unanimous in recommending that the Parsons Elastic Laces be accepted for CAOT's Product Recognition Program. This product could be recommended by occupational therapists as compensatory aid across the continuum of care to help their clients to facilitate dressing/mobility independence and increase participation in activities (social, leisure, productivity). This product is ideal for people who wear lace up shoes that require some adjustments because of swollen feet, and this product can also be used by people who have difficulty tying laces but prefer to wear lace up shoes. In future, reviewers would like to see more testimonials from users of this product.