

How to Buy Sports Shoes That Fit



A carpenter needs a saw, a painter needs a brush, and an accountant needs a calculator. And anyone who's serious about fitness needs a good pair of shoes (or several, if you're active in more than one activity besides swimming). The right shoes can make the difference between comfort and discomfort, between safety and injury, between performing well and not performing well.

Consider these factors before you buy activewear shoes.

- Are the shoes suitable for the sport or activity for which you intend to wear them? Walking, hiking, racquetball, tennis, aerobics, and so forth require differently designed footwear. But you may want to consider cross-training shoes, suitable for several different activities.
- Can you wiggle your toes in the shoes while sitting and standing? (You should be able to.)
- Does the widest area of your foot correspond to the widest area of the shoe? (To find out, try this: Stand on a piece of paper, bend down, and trace a line around each shoe with a pencil. Then slip off your shoes, stand in the same place, and trace a line around each foot with a different colored pencil. If at any point the outline of your feet is larger than the outline of your shoes, you're squeezing some or all of the bones, ligaments and muscles in each foot.)
- Do the inner seams rub against your foot? (They shouldn't.)
- Does the shoe have a firm heel cradle and arch support?
- Does the shoe provide adequate shock absorption?
- Are the shoes comfortable when you move from side to side or when you walk or jump? Test these movements before you buy.

Good shoes don't need to be "broken in." The shoes you buy should be comfortable from the start.