

Selecting Athletic Shoes

Proper-fitting sports shoes can enhance performance and prevent injuries. Follow these specially-designed fitting facts when purchasing a new pair of athletic shoes.

- Try on athletic shoes after a workout or run and at the end of the day. Your feet will be at their largest.
- Wear the same type of sock that you will wear for that sport.
- When the shoe is on your foot, you should be able to freely wiggle all of your toes.
- The shoes should be comfortable as soon as you try them on. There is no break-in period.
- Walk or run a few steps in your shoes. They should be comfortable.
- Always relace the shoes you are trying on. You should begin at the farthest eyelets and apply even pressure as you a crisscross lacing pattern to the top of the shoe.
- There should be a firm grip of the shoe to your heel. Your heel should not slip as you walk or run.
- If you participate in a sport three or more times a week, you need a sports specific shoe.

It can be hard to choose from the many different types of athletic shoes available. There are differences in design and variations in material and weight. These differences have been developed to protect the areas of the feet that encounter the most stress in a particular athletic activity.

Athletic Shoes Groups

Athletic shoes are grouped into seven categories:

- **Running, training, and walking.** Includes shoes for hiking, jogging, and exercise walking. Look for a good walking shoe to have a comfortable soft upper, good shock absorption, smooth tread, and a rocker sole design that encourages the natural roll of the foot during the walking motion. The features of a good jogging shoe include cushioning, flexibility, control and stability in the heel counter area, lightness, and good traction.

- **Court sports.** Includes shoes for tennis, basketball, and volleyball. Most court sports require the body to move forward, backward, and side-to-side. As a result, most athletic shoes used for court sports are subjected to heavy abuse. The key to finding a good court shoe is its sole. Ask a coach or shoes salesman to help you select the best type of sole for the sport you plan on participating in.
- **Field sports.** Includes shoes for soccer, football, and baseball. These shoes are cleated, studded, or spiked. The spike and stud formations vary from sport to sport, but generally are replaceable or detachable cleats, spikes, or studs affixed into nylon soles.
- **Winter sports.** Includes footwear for figure skating, ice hockey, alpine skiing, and cross-country skiing. The key to a good winter sports shoe is its ability to provide ample ankle support.
- **Track and field sport shoes.** Because of the specific needs of individual runners, athletic shoe companies produce many models for various foot types, gait patterns, and training styles. It is always best to ask your coach about the type of shoe that should be selected for the event you are participating in.
- **Specialty sports.** Includes shoes for golf, aerobic dancing, and bicycling.
- **Outdoor sports.** Includes shoes used for recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, and boating.

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