



Athletic Shoes

Proper-fitting sports shoes can enhance athletic performance and prevent injuries.

Tips for Finding the Correct Shoes

Follow these specially designed fitting facts when purchasing a new pair of athletic shoes.

- Try on athletic shoes after a workout or run, or at the end of the day. This is when 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. You should not expect a break-in period.
- Walk or run a few steps in your shoes. They should be comfortable.
- Always re-lace the shoes you are trying on. You should begin at the farthest eyelets and apply even pressure as you criss-cross a lacing pattern to the top of the shoe. Modifying the lace pattern should be discussed with a shoe expert.
- 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 sport-specific shoe.
- Purchase your shoes from a store that has salespeople who are knowledgeable about athletic shoes and different foot types.

Types of Athletic Shoes

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 are grouped into several categories: Running, training, walking, hiking, jogging, and exercise walking. There are seven categories of shoes, listed below.

Aerobic Activity Shoes

These shoes are for aerobic activities such as running, training, walking, 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. Find shoes that are designed for the shape of your foot (flatfoot, high arch, wide, or narrow are examples).

Court Sports

Court shoes include 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 shoe salesperson to help you select the best type of sole for the sports you play.

Field Sports

Field sports shoes include 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. Ask your coach what kinds of cleats are recommended for field sports participation.

Consider placing a gel pad inside these shoes to help with shock absorption. This will minimize stress from the cleats on the heel.

Winter Sports

Winter sports shoes include 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, so the shoes should fit snugly on both feet.

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 your track or field event.

Specialty Sports

Specialty sports shoes include shoes for golf, dancing, and cycling. The fit of these shoes will depend upon the activity. A snug fit is a must for cycling, and a comfortable shoe with ample support should be considered for walking on a golf course.

Outdoor Sports

Outdoor sports shoes include shoes used for recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, and boating. Make sure that these shoes have the warmth, foot support, and appropriate tread for your activity.