

Q. What kind of shoes should I wear for exercise?

A. The kind of shoes that fit your feet, feel comfortable, and make sense for the exercise activity you enjoy. Translation: If you're shoe shopping for fashion first, you could be in trouble.

Have you ever had foot pain or uttered the words, "my feet are killing me?" You're not alone. And your shoes may be to blame.

The wrong shoes, or poorly-fitting shoes, can make it hard to enjoy walking, jogging, or exercise.¹ But it doesn't have to be that way.

Ready to find the right shoe to help you be more active?

Here's what you need to know:²

1. Shop late in the day

Your feet swell slightly throughout the day. Try on shoes after work to get the best fit.

2. Measure your feet

Most shoe stores have a device that can measure the length and width of your feet. Use it at least once a year so you know your actual shoe size.

Don't be surprised if your feet are different sizes.

- Most people have a longer foot.
- Some have a wider foot.
- If your feet are within a half size, you can usually do okay buying a pair to fit the larger foot.



- Sometimes an insert is needed.
- If they are more than 1-1/2 sizes apart, you should buy two pairs of shoes.
- Some shoe stores offer a cost break if you buy two different sizes (<https://tinyurl.com/y67hqe1e>).

3. Know your foot type

Your arches might need special support. Or you may need a wider shoe or extra room for your toes.

Sometimes you should see a foot doctor for foot problems like:

- Heel pain
- Corns
- Achilles tendonitis
- Bunions
- Hammertoe
- Ingrown toenails
- Other foot-related problems³

4. Choose a shoe based on activity

Do you need a separate pair of shoes for walking, hiking, and running? Not always. But shoes are designed for specific sports for a reason:

- **Running shoes:** Cushioning to absorb impact, support arches, reduce injury
- **Basketball shoes:** Ankle support for jumping, landing, and quick turns

ASK THE WELLNESS DOCTOR

- **Hiking:** Ankle support and stronger tread for stability and traction

5. Evaluate fit & feel

Found a new pair of shoes for exercise?

- Try them on.
- Walk around.
- Make sure you have a half inch to an inch of room between your toes and the end of the shoe.
- If it's too tight or too loose, keep looking until you find a pair that fits.

One more piece of advice...

Never buy a shoe expecting to "break it in." It's a recipe for blisters and other foot problems.

A good pair of shoes will feel good when you try them on and help you enjoy your favorite form of exercise.

References

1. Watson, S. (2022). 8 ways to avoid foot pain. From: <https://tinyurl.com/bzudehnc>
2. University of Nebraska. (2021). 7 tips for choosing the perfect shoes for your feet. From: <https://tinyurl.com/3uz2rvbu>
3. Tresky, P. (2020). Prescription custom orthotics and shoe inserts. *Journal of the American Podiatric Medical Association*. From: <https://tinyurl.com/yzefpvhy>