



Selecting The Right Athletic Shoes

Feet bear much of the burden for most athletic activities. Selecting the right athletic shoe is as equally important as selecting the right golf club or tennis racket. A well-fitting, well-made and properly used athletic shoe can help reduce foot problems and increase performance.

Depending on the sport of choice, there is a shoe to meet your foot care needs. Different sports call for specific footwear to protect feet and ankles. For example, a running shoe is built to accommodate the impact that concentrates on the forefoot, while a tennis shoe is made to give relatively more support to the ankles, and permit sudden stops and turns.

Following is a rundown of sports and recommended shoe type:

Cycling: Select a cycling-specific shoe that is right for you among models designed for racing and mountain biking. The casual rider without known foot problems can use cross training shoes (i.e. combination cycling hiking shoes), which provide the necessary support across the arch and instep in a shoe as well as the heel lift that cycling shoes give.

Golf: No longer driven by fashion, today's golf shoes are constructed using basic principles of athletic footwear. Advanced technological innovations keep golf shoes light and add strength.

Running: A good pair of running shoes is the most important piece of equipment for a runner. Shoe choice should be determined by weight, foot structure, and running regimen. Shoes have different shapes, and sizes are not uniform from shoe to shoe.

Tennis: Proper tennis shoes "give" enough to allow for side-to-side sliding. In addition, tennis shoes need to have padded toe boxes to prevent injuries.

Walking: The ideal walking shoe should be stable from side to side, and well-cushioned, and it should enable you to walk smoothly. Running shoes are acceptable for a walking program, but specialty walking shoes tend to be slightly less cushioned, not as bulky and lighter than running shoes.

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Proper fit is the key in selecting athletic shoes. Keep these tips in mind when you're buying athletic shoes:

- Have your feet measured while you're standing
- Always try on both shoes, and walk in the shoes before buying them
- Buy for the larger foot; feet are rarely the same size
- Shoes should feel comfortable immediately, not needing a break-in period
- Shop for shoes later in the day; feet swell during the day
- Be sure that the widest part of your foot corresponds to the widest part of the shoe
- Try on shoes while you're wearing the same type of sock you'll be wearing with the shoe.