

How to Buy a Great Pair of Exercise Shoes

The “big wall of shoes” at the sporting store can be intimidating. It’s kind of like being in a restaurant with so many menu options; it’s hard to choose. Follow these ten steps to a great shoe purchase:

1. Know your own feet. Look at a pair of your old sneakers and check the wear. Does your foot roll inward or outward? Most brands of shoes have several types to fit any foot.
2. Shop later in the day. Feet swell as the day goes on, so if you purchase shoes in the morning you may find them to be too snug in the afternoon.
3. Bring your workout socks with you and try the shoes on with them.
4. Buy shoes that feel good when you try them on. If they are too small, don’t buy them thinking they will stretch out. Some leather exercise shoes may stretch a bit, but nylon mesh shoes will remain the same for the life of the shoe.
5. If you have particularly narrow or wide feet, shop around for a brand that carries the width you need.
6. If you are a man, buy a man’s shoe. If you are a woman, buy a woman’s shoe. Shoes are made on forms that are specific to men and women.
7. It’s worth the time to shop around for a store that has experienced sales people who can discuss your unique needs and concerns for use, durability and fit. Some running shoe stores have salespeople trained to watch you run in their shoes, analyze your gait and footfall, and recommend the right pair of shoes for you. Try on several pairs in various brands before buying.
8. Do some of your exercise moves while trying on shoes.
9. Buy shoes for what you do most. If it’s running, running shoes it is. If you also play a sport, such as tennis or basketball, in addition to your other workouts, buy shoes specifically for those sports.
10. Ask if the shoe has a “life”. With running shoes, for instance, the salesperson may be able to tell you how many miles the shoe will last you for. This is a good to know when evaluating the cost of shoes.

Just like your body, your feet will change over time. Periodically re-evaluate to make sure you are still in the right shoes. Once you go through this process, you learn more about your specific needs and what brands fit and work best for the way you exercise.