

Shopping for Shoes

When shopping for exercise shoes, keep in mind:

- ⇒ Purchase name brand shoes such as Nike, Avia, Reebok, Rockport, etc. A quality, name-brand shoe is worth the investment because they have good support and will not break down as quickly. Broken down, worn shoes will increase your risk of discomfort or injury.
- ⇒ If you are unfamiliar with the numerous brands and styles on the market, go to a store that specializes in exercise shoes. There is no “best” brand of shoe. Each brand of shoe has different characteristics. Choose the one that fits your foot and feels good.
- ⇒ Look for firmness in the heel counter, the part that cups your heel. To check the heel counter, hold the shoe so the heel is facing you. Place your thumbs midway between the sole seam and the top edge of the heel counter. Press firmly. You should not be able to bow or bend the heel counter.
- ⇒ Choose a shoe that is designed for the activity you will be doing. Shoes are designed to meet the demands of a specific activity. For example, if your primary activity is walking, purchase a walking shoe, not a running shoe. The sole of a walking shoe is designed to bend easily at the ball of the foot, where running shoes have a stiffer sole to help in the distribution of shock. Aerobics shoes should have more cushioning at the ball of foot. If you will be using the shoes for several activities, consider a cross trainer. To reduce risk of injury, improve performance and keep enjoyment in your activity, purchase a shoe that will meet the demands you will place on it.
- ⇒ Look for a shoe with a good arch support. If you wear orthotic inserts, you may need to remove them and replace them with thin inserts such as Dr. Scholls.
- ⇒ When trying on shoes, it’s important to wear the same weight socks you will be wearing to exercise. Also, try on both shoes to make sure they each fit properly.
- ⇒ Test drive new shoes on carpeting as well as a hard surface. Wear the shoes for several days indoors to ensure they fit correctly. If they don't, return them.
- ⇒ Replace worn shoes. Shoes that are broken down can increase your risk of injury. Check your shoes for signs of wear, including worn soles or insides, sides that are bowing in or out or a heel counter that has lost stiffness or bows. You may also need to replace your shoes if you begin to feel an ache that you never had before (typically in your feet, ankles, knees or low back).

