Choosing the right shoe

Choose a shoe that fits the activity

- **Running shoes** have additional cushioning to absorb shock as your foot hits the ground, which helps to reduce blisters. They are flexible, lightweight, and designed for forward motion, so they don’t support you well when you move in other directions, such as moving sideways when playing basketball or doing step aerobics.

- **Trail shoes** have added traction for running and walking on grass, mud, or trails.

- **Walking shoes** tend to be stiffer and heavier than running shoes. These provide more support since your foot rolls from heel to toe more slowly than when you run.

- **Cross-training shoes** are great for people who have a varied workout routine or play different sports. This is the most versatile athletic shoe, designed to give more support for direction changes and impact, making them an economical choice. They are heavier and less cushioned than running shoes and are not recommended if running is the main activity.

- **Specialty shoes** exist for weight-lifting, cycling, hiking, tennis, basketball, soccer, and more. If you engage in these activities several days per week, consider buying a sport-specific shoe to fit your needs.
If the shoe fits, wear it!

When you get fitted for a new pair of activity shoes, go to the experts at a sporting goods store or to a podiatrist. You may pay a little more to get the assistance of a trained expert, but in the long run, it may save you money, not to mention your feet. Your feet are unique; work with a knowledgeable shoe or foot professional to assess the width, length, and arch type of your feet.

- If shoes are too narrow or too wide, they can create painful blisters and calluses. Ask for assistance in measuring both of your feet. Stand up while your foot is measured to get the most accurate measurement.
- If one foot is larger than the other, try on a pair of shoes that fits your larger foot. Try on both shoes and check the fit.
- Make sure the toe box of the shoe provides enough room for your toes. The toe box should not only allow enough room from side to side and in front of your toes, it should also allow for wiggle room above your toes. If you don’t have at least a half inch between your longest toe and the end of the shoe (approximately the width of your finger), try a larger size.
- Choose shoes that accommodate your arch type:
  - If your feet have a normal arch, look for shoes with firm midsoles, moderate heel stability, and a straight to semi-curved last. The last is the form, or “footprint,” around which a shoe is built.
  - If your feet are low-arched or flat, they may not support your body well and you may experience stress or joint problems in your feet or knees. Look for shoes with motion control to help stabilize your feet.
  - If your feet have high arches, they may not absorb shock well, causing excessive strain on joints and muscles. Look for shoes with cushioning to compensate for your lack of natural shock absorption.