

# Choosing Proper Footwear

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## What is proper footwear for exercise?

- Shoes that offer support for feet and ankles.
- Shoes that give the toes ample room.
- Shoes that have soles that cushion and have a non-skid surface.
- Shoes that are appropriate for weather and floor surfaces.

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## Do I have to wear sneakers?

- Sneaker companies do make many good styles and types of shoes for exercise.
- There are support shoes that will provide better support and comfort if you have special orthopedic needs. Ask your doctor or podiatrist for advice.

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## Can I use shoes I already have? How do I know they will be safe to exercise in?

- Check for heel and tread wear—replace if worn.
- Does the shoe provide ankle, instep, and foot support?
- Is the toe box wide enough to wiggle your toes while standing?
- The shoe should fit the natural outline of the foot and fit snug, but not tight. There should also be about a 3/4 inch space beyond the big toe (or the longest toe) when you stand.
- The shoe should be designed for the activity you are planning on doing. Walking shoes are for walking; dress shoes will not have the cushioning and support your feet need for extended walking.

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## What else is important?

- Appropriate foot care for nails and skin should be a part of your daily routine.
- See a podiatrist if foot care is difficult.
- Finding a comfortable shoe is important for those who have diabetes, poor circulation, infections, corns or blisters.
- Buy new shoes when your current shoe shows signs of wear such as worn tread on heel of bottom.

