

Buying the Right Shoes

These days there seems to be a different shoe for every activity imaginable. What shoe is best? Should I buy a cross-trainer, tennis shoe, running shoe, or walking shoe? Can't I just buy one type of shoe for all my activities? Is it really necessary to buy different shoes for different activities? Hopefully the following information will help you decide what shoe or shoes to buy. Dr. Stephen Pribut, an expert in athletic shoes, has compiled this valuable information.

Running shoes: This seems to be the best selling type of exercise shoe. It is obviously great for running, but is also good for walking and many other low-impact activities that do not involve a great deal of side-to-side movement. You should avoid wearing running shoes while participating in such activities as basketball, tennis, and racquetball, or activities with repetitive jumping, like aerobics. If you choose to wear running shoes for any of these activities do not complain when you start to feel aches and pains from injury.

Basketball/Tennis shoes: These shoes should have good traction, good ankle support, and firm cushioning. Buying a shoe with these characteristics will help prevent injuries.

Cross-trainers: This shoe is designed to be versatile. Cross-trainers can be worn for running, walking, racquet sports, and aerobics, as well as some indoor-court sports such as basketball and volleyball. Even though cross-trainers are versatile, the serious runner is better off wearing real running shoes, because cross-trainers lack the sufficient amount of cushioning and ankle support required for regular jogging.

Walking shoes: These are designed for the serious race-walker. They are a needless and expensive investment for those who jog as well as walk for exercise, though. The majority of running shoes are better for your feet than most walking shoes anyway, because running shoes provide more wiggle room for your toes.

Air-cushioned soles: Air-cushioning sounds high-tech and therefore helpful, but it can cause more problems than it can prevent. Although air-cushioned athletic shoes provide helpful shock absorption, they lack a firm shank below the back of the foot. A firm shank and a slight heel lift prevent the arch of the foot from dropping down too far when the foot moves. If the foot drops too far, it can cause a shift of bones and the development of a variety of podiatric deformities.

Resources:

Athletic shoes. Dr. Stephen M. Pribut's Sport Pages website. Available at: www.drpribut.com/sports/sportframe.html