

# Shoe

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia  
(Redirected from Shoes)

A **shoe** is an item of footwear worn on the foot or feet of a human. Shoes may vary from a simple flip-flop to a complex boot. Shoes may have high or low heels, although in western cultures, high heels are considered a woman's style. Shoe materials include leather or canvas. Athletic shoe soles may be made of rubber.

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Women's shoes on display in a shop window, July 2005

## Parts of a shoe

### Sole

The bottom of a shoe is named the sole. It consists of several layers, and is usually a separate piece from the upper shoe (though not always, as in the case of wooden shoes).

### Insole

The insole is the interior bottom of the shoe, which sits directly beneath the foot. Many shoes have removable and replaceable insoles, and extra insoles are often added for comfort or health reasons (to control the shape, moisture,

or smell of the shoe).

## Outsole

The outsole is the layer in direct contact with the ground. The material of the outsole depends on the function, dressiness, and quality of the shoe, but is generally very durable material, since it experiences the most stress. Dressier shoes have leather outsoles; casual or work-oriented shoes have outsoles made of natural rubber or a synthetic imitation or in the case of ballet shoes - cardboard. The outsole may comprise a single piece, or may comprise separate pieces of different materials. Often the heel of the sole is rubber for durability and traction, while the front is leather for style. Specialized shoes will often have modifications on this design: athletic cleats have spikes embedded in the outsole to grip the ground; many kinds of dancing shoes have much softer or harder soles.

## Heel

The bottom rear part of a shoe is the heel. These come in a variety of sizes and are usually made to support the large stresses applied to the heel of the foot. They are often made of the same material as the sole of the shoe.

## Vamp, or upper

Any shoe has an upper part that helps hold the shoe onto the foot. In the simplest cases, such as sandals or flip flops, this may be nothing more than a few straps for holding the sole in place. Closed footwear, such as boots, sneakers and most men's shoes, will usually have a more complex upper.

## Tongue

In some shoes and boots the tongue is a flap-like, usually flexible, part that goes underneath the laces.

## Accessories to shoes

- shoe horn - can be used to insert a foot into a shoe by keeping the shoe open and providing a smooth surface for the foot to slide upon.
- shoe tree - placed inside the shoe when user is not wearing it, to help maintain the shoe's shape
- shoe polishing equipment - used for boots also
  - shoe polish - a material spread on shoes to improve appearance, glossiness, and provide protection
  - polishing cloth - a piece of fabric used to apply polish to the shoe
- overshoes - a rubber covering placed over shoes for rain and snow protection
- orthotic insert - inserts for cushioning, improved fitting, or reduced abrasion. These include padding and inner linings. The insert may also be for the correction of foot problems
- shoe bag - a bag that protects the shoes against damage when packed in the bag
- shoe inserts
- shoe stretcher - a tool for making a shoe longer or wider or for reducing discomfort in areas of a shoe.

## Purpose of shoes

Shoes fall into one of the following categories: dress, casual, work, snow, athletic, comfort and boots.

### Dress and casual shoes

## Dress shoes



Casual shoes, made of leather

are categorized by smooth and supple leather uppers, leather soles, and narrow sleek shape. Casual shoes are characterized by sturdy leather uppers, non-leather outsoles, and wide profile.

Some designs of dress shoes can be worn by either gender. The majority of dress shoes have an upper covering, commonly made of leather, enclosing most of the lower foot, but not covering the ankles. This upper part of the shoe is often made without apertures or openings, but also made with openings or even a connected series of straps, e. g. an open toe feature in women's shoes. Shoes with ankle length (covering the ankles) upper bodies are also available. Such shoes often have zippers to open them.

## Men's shoes

Men's shoes can be categorized by how they are closed:

- Balmorals - the vamp has a V-shaped slit to which the laces are attached; also known as "closed lacing." In England, the balmoral is known as the Oxford. The word "Oxford" is used by American clothing companies to market shoes that are not Oxfords, such as rubber-sole bluchers.
- Blüchers - the laces are tied to two pieces of leather independently attached to the vamp; also known as "open lacing." In England, the Blucher is known as the Derby shoe.
- Monk-straps - a buckle and strap instead of lacing



Shoes made from real crocodile skin, in a conservation exhibit at Bristol Zoo, England

Various other closings exist but are less popular such as side-elastic closings.

Men's shoes can also be decorated in various ways:

- Plain-toes - have a sleek appearance and no extra decorations on the vamp.
- Cap-toes - has an extra layer of leather that 'caps' the toe. This is possibly the most popular decoration
- Wing-tips - The toe of the shoe is covered with a perforated panel, the wing-tip, which extends down either side of the shoe. Wing-tips can be found in both balmoral and blucher styles. In England this is called a brogue.

## Women's shoes

- Heels - shoes with short, sturdy heels
- Flats - shoes with almost no heel at all
  - Ballerina shoes, aka, ballet flats - mimicking the appearance of ballet shoes, pointe shoes.
- Medium height heels ("kitten" heels have less than 2 inches of height)
- High heels
  - Stiletto heels - high, usually pointed, heels
  - Killer heels - very high, usually 4" or greater, heels, worn for their glamour- or sex-appeal
- Open-toed shoes - sometimes called "peep toe"
- Mary Janes

- Espadrilles - a casual sandal, with a canvas top and a rope sole
- Mule - a close-toed, open-heeled slipper

### Either gender

- Clog
- Platform shoe - shoe with very thick soles and heels, mainly worn by women in the U.S.
- Loafers - 'slip-on' shoes with no lacing
- Moccasin - originated by American Indians
- Sandals - open shoes consisting of a sole and various straps
- Saddle shoe - leather shoe with a contrasting saddle-shaped band over the instep, typically white uppers with black "saddle"
- Loafer
  - a dress or casual shoe without laces; often with tassels, buckles, or coin-holders (penny loafers)



Women's sandals.

### Athletic Shoes

Men's and women's athletic shoes and special function shoes often have



A shoe for right foot

less difference between the sexes than in dress shoes. In many cases these shoes can be worn by either sex. Emphasis tends to be more on function than style.

- sneakers/trainers (also called *gym shoes* or *tennis shoes*) - general purpose athletic shoes; made out of rubber, cloth, and/or plastic to be lightweight, flexible, and have good traction. Special varieties available for basketball or tennis.
- running shoes - very similar to above
- boating shoes - also similar to above. They have soft soles/heels to avoid marring or scratching a boat deck.
- track shoes - lightweight; often with plastic or metal cleats
- football shoes - with plastic or metal cleats
- golf shoes - with "spikes" for better grip in grass and wet ground. Originally the spikes or "cleats" were made of metal but replacable "soft spikes" made of synthetic plastic-like materials with prongs distributed radially around the edge of each spike are much more common today (and are required on many golf courses since they cause less damage to the greens)
- bowling shoes - intermediate style between ordinary dress shoes and athletic shoes. They have harder rubber soles/heels so as not to damage bowling alley floors. They are often rented or loaned at bowling alleys.
- hiking shoes or boots - usually have a high somewhat stiff upper with many lace eyelets, to provide ankle support on uneven terrain, with extra large traction on the sole.
- walking shoes - have a more flexible sole than the running shoe, lighter in weight than the hiking boot, may have air holes, may not be water proof.
- climbing shoes
- orthopedic shoes - specially designed for people with foot problems.
- skating shoes - typically called *skates*. They have various attachments for skating on the bottom of the shoe portion.
  - ice skates

- roller skates
- inline skates
- ski boot - a large, thick plastic boot specially designed for attachment to the ski.
- skateboarding shoes- used for skateboarding but also worn by teenagers for fashion
- cycling shoes are equipped with a metal cleat to interface with clipless pedals, as well as a stiff sole to maximize power transfer and support the foot.
- sneaker boot
  - and sneaker pump - a shoe that looks like an athletic shoe, but is equipped with a heel, making it a kind of novelty dress shoe
- Skateboarding Shoes have flat soles for a better grip on a skateboard. They are very wide and have extra layers of padding to protect the skateboarders feet. A lot of people wear them for comfort because of their width and soft padding.

## Comfort Shoes

Shoes that are made with pedorthic and anatomically-correct comfort qualities such as padded removable footbeds, wide toe boxes and arch support.

## Categories

- shoes are any type of footwear worn on the foot, and to prevent further argument, shoes include slippers, any type of heel shoes, ugg, and anything else you wear on your foot (not socks).

## Dancing shoes

- dance shoes - special shoes made for tap, jazz, ballet or ballroom dancing.
- pointe shoes - shoes designed for professional ballet dancing.
- tango/flamenco dance shoes.
- dance sneakers (or dansneakers)- a combination of a sneaker and a dance shoe, with a block toe like a dance shoe
- Character shoes- special shoes usually used in plays and can be adapted into tap shoes
- irish step dancing shoes- green shoes with gold coins in them

## Work shoes

Work shoes are designed to stand heavy wear, to protect the wearer, and provide high traction. They are generally made from sturdy leather uppers and non-leather outsoles. Sometimes they are used for uniforms or comfort by nurses, waitresses, police, military personnel, etc. They are commonly used for protection in industrial settings, construction, mining, and other workplaces. Protective features may include steel-tipped toes and soles or ankle guards.

## Snow shoes

Snowshoes are special shoes for walking in thick snow. In temperate climates, snowshoes are used for mostly recreational purposes in winter.

## Boots

Boots are special shoes that are used in times of bad weather, or simply as an alternate style of casual or dress wear. Styles include rubber boots and snow boots, as well as work boots and hiking boots.

## Maintenance

- **Breaking-in** - Some shoes are made of hard but deformable material. After a person wears them multiple times, the material reforms to fit the wearer's feet. The person is said to have **broken in** the shoes.
- **Polishing** - for protection, water resistance (to some extent) and appearance, especially for leather shoes and boots.
- **Heel replacement** - heels periodically wear out. Not all shoes are designed to enable this.
- **Sole replacement** - soles also wear out. Not all shoes can have their soles replaced.
- **Shoelace replacement**.
- When unfit for use, shoes can be treated as trash or municipal solid waste and disposed of. The exception can be with most athletic sneakers which can be recycled and turned into other raw materials. See Nike Grind as an example.



An abandoned shoe, Kåre Sand, Wadden Sea, Denmark

Someone who makes or repairs shoes in a shop is called a *cobbler*.

## Shoe etiquette

In most parts of the world (Asia, Eastern Europe, parts of the Middle East and Africa, much of Northern Europe and Canada, as well as Alaska) it is customary to remove shoes when entering a house. In some areas of the United States, especially the Midwest, it is expected that visitors remove their shoes unless a host specifically invites them to leave their shoes on. People do this to avoid bringing dirt, mud or snow into the house. For some societies, including those in Asia, indoor footwear may be provided for guests.

In the Middle East, parts of Africa, Korea and Thailand, it is considered rude to show the soles of the feet to others (even accidentally, such as by crossing the legs). In addition, in Thailand, it is an extreme insult for the foot, socks, or shoes to touch someone's head or be placed over it. Although feet touching heads is an extremely rare occurrence in any society, some Muay Thai boxers insult each other by "kicking" the opponent's head with their foot (most Muay Thai kicks are executed with the shin).

See also dress code.

## Shoes in Literature

In literature and film, an empty shoe or pair of shoes signifies death.

## Sizes

- Units for shoe sizes vary widely around the world. European sizes are measured in **Paris Points**, which are worth two-thirds of a centimetre. The UK and American units are approximately one-quarter of an inch, starting at 8¼ inches. Men's and women's shoe sizes often have different scales. Shoes size is often measured using a Brannock Device, which can determine both the width and length of the foot.

## Shoe companies

See the category shoe companies for a list of shoe companies.

## Bibliography

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- *Shoes : A Celebration of Pumps, Sandals, Slippers & More*, ISBN 0-7611-0114-4
- *A Century of Shoes: Icons of Style in the 20th Century*, Angela Pattison ISBN 0-7858-0835-3
- *Shoes* , Elizabeth Cotton (1999) ISBN 1-55670-894-7

- *Shoes : A Lexicon of Style*, Valerie Steel ISBN 0-8478-2166-8
- *Mad About Shoes*, Emma Bowd ISBN 1-84172-353-3
- *Bootism : A Shoe Religion*, Penina Goodman, Michael Duranko (2003) ISBN 0-7407-3832-1
- *The Perfect Fit: What Your Shoes Say about You*, Meghan Cleary, Sydney Van Dyke ISBN 0-8118-4501-X

## See also

- Footwear
- Shoelaces
- Boot
- Imelda Marcos
- Sandals
- Slippers
- Skates
- List of shoe designers
- Foot odor



Shopping for shoes

## External links

- Footwear History (<http://www.footwearhistory.com>)
- International Shoe Size Conversion Charts (<http://www.i18nguy.com/110n/shoes.html>) , from i18nguy's website, offers more information.
- Shoe Care (<http://www.schuh-lexikon.de/en/shoe-care.html>)
- The History of Footwear (<http://podiatry.curtin.edu.au/shoo.html>) , includes diagrams of parts
- The Political History of Shoes (<http://users.resist.ca/~kirstena/pageshoehistory.html>)
- NB North Shore - Online New Balance Shoe Store (<http://www.nbnorthshore.com>)
- Reviews of Golf Shoes (<http://www.custom-golf-clubs.com/golfShoes.htm>)

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