

HOW TO SELECT BALLROOM DANCE SHOES • (Printed in part from "ehow.com")

Ballroom dancing is glamorous, energetic, and thrilling, but, it can be awfully painful if you aren't wearing proper footwear. With so many options, it is important to know what kind of ballroom dance shoes to buy.

All dance shoes, including ballroom dance shoes, are specially designed to support dancers' feet and bodies, absorb shock and allow dancers' feet to move and flex in a manner that is optimal for their style of dance. They are also designed to protect the dance floor and to keep dancers from sliding and skidding.

Dance shoes should fit as close as possible without causing pain or discomfort. There should be no gap in the heel if possible, no slipping or movement inside the shoe. The shoes should feel like they are part of your foot. Buy your shoes to fit at the widest part of your foot, even if it means you have to get inserts for narrow heels, etc.

Ballroom dancing shoes should be preserved and used only for dancing in the ballroom or other smooth, clean surfaces. Be sure to keep soles, especially suede soles, brushed and free of any debris. Great dancing shoes can easily be wrecked by wearing them on gravel, pavement or rough asphalt.

- *You may find less expensive shoes on line, however, It is very important to try on dance shoes before buying.*
- The proper sole is a good foundation for your dancing ability. Suede soles give a good amount of traction, especially on the standard wooden dance floors we most commonly experience. Leather soles tend to be more slippery, but are a good option for a beginner who would like to spend less.

• *Determine your needs.* Are you a social dancer, (meaning you take lessons and use what you learn at local dance clubs and weddings)? Consider just buying something like a character shoe, which is very versatile and less expensive.



- *Choose a style.* If you are highly involved in ballroom dancing, then invest in a good dance shoe. For rhythm/latin dances, buy a latin shoe. These dance shoes are higher and thinner in heel, are usually open toe, have straps and a much more flexible sole for all that fast twisting footwork. They should fit snugly and bend with your feet. Your big toe should be at the very tip of the edge. Choose a heel height based on comfort and your own height.



- For waltz, foxtrot, quickstep and tango (smooth/standard dances), buy a standard shoe. These dance shoes usually resemble regular pump high heels. They should fit snugly so as not to fall off. If you have wide feet, it is not always good to get a wide dance shoe because dance shoes stretch.



- For the gentlemen there are fewer options. The ballroom dance shoe has a lower heel, while the latin shoe may have a one to two inch heel. These styles are available in lace-up or non-lacing styles.
- While choosing shoes that are comfortable and have great support for your feet, they also need to hold up. Make sure there aren't any sharp edges that will press on your ankle. Look out for seams on the inside that can chafe your skin after long hours of dancing or practice. You can also add arch supports for greater comfort.

