

CHOOSING THE CORRECT FOOTWEAR

"Tennis shoes" continues to be a generic term for any athletic footwear. However, with advancements in technology, "tennis shoes" have become sport specific. Yes, "tennis shoes" are now considered a piece of equipment. What makes tennis shoes different from other athletic shoes? Each pair of tennis shoes has some level of outsole cushioning, support, and durability.

OUTSOLE

When a player's foot meets the ground, it's the shoe's outsole that makes the first contact. The outsole is constantly in touch with the court, so it's the foundation upon which the shoe is built. All tennis shoes have a level of shock absorption in the form of cushioning in the heel and the ball of the foot. The comfort of the shoe increases with the increase in cushioning. The "toe-drag" guard feature prolongs the life of the shoe by adding additional rubber to the portion of the shoe that drags during the service motion. The herringbone pattern on the outsole increases the traction on hard court surfaces. Many shoe manufacturers offer six month guarantees for their outsoles.

SUPPORT

Tennis is a game of movement. To be an effective player, you need to mobility of movement side to side as well as up and back. The lateral support system in a shoe aids in the stability of your foot while allowing the side to side movement. In addition to lateral support, tennis shoes are also made with a level of anti-roll support in the outsole. This is usually located in the shank under the arch of the foot. Special support shoes can be found with additional ankle support in the form of midtops.

DURABILITY

With durability comes weight. All leather uppers in the shoe weigh more than a mesh upper. So, shoe manufacturers promote the shoe as durable or lightweight. Leather shoes hold the heat generated by physical exertion while mesh shoes allow the foot to breathe. Leather shoes will last longer while mesh shoes are generally more comfortable, but wear out quicker.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS

Lightweight or durable. High levels of support or minimum support. Different levels of cushioning. Each component of your shoe has an impact on the way you play: the choice is yours.