

WHY ARE SHOES IMPORTANT?

Appropriate shoes are important when salsa dancing for a number of reasons:

1. Salsa steps can be fast! Turning, or even doing the basic step in improper shoes can be bad news for ankles, toes and pretty much all the bones and ligaments in your feet and legs, not to mention elsewhere in your body if you happen to fall.
2. Loose shoes or shoes without straps around the foot and ankle, flat shoes with no straps, flip flops, and some sandals are not only dangerous because you can so easily fall off or out of them, but there is also a chance they could fly off and hurt someone else.



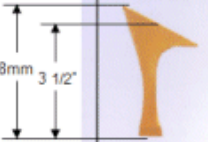

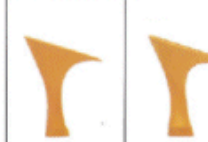



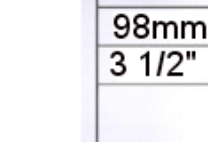
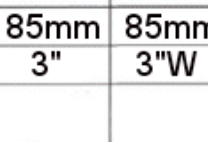
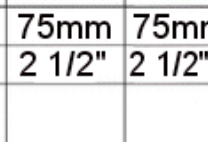
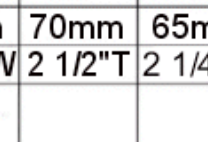
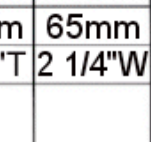

“Great for the Beach—Dangerous for Dance!”

3. Have you ever tried to slide on a wood floor with bare feet? Yikes! If you'd like to avoid the pain of blisters and friction burns, appropriate shoes are necessary.
4. Have you ever tried to slide on a wood floor with socks? Too slippery! The chances of slipping and falling are so high when wearing socks that it makes sense to just wear shoes!
5. Heavy boots, although allowed if you are comfortable and can move, can make some movements difficult, and stepping on a partner's foot with a chunky boot could be painful.



“Great for Chicago’s Winter Weather—Not so Easy to Dance In!”

6. Although running shoes and sneakers are fine, especially when first learning, you will soon discover that they provide too much friction when making turns and some other movements more difficult.
7. Heels or no heels? This is your preference; for men, a dressier shoe with a slight heel might be comfortable, while flat shoes for men and women are completely fine as well. Women can feel free to wear heels of any height (2”-3” is the most common for Latin dance), as long as the shoes follow the guidelines (such as supportive straps and appropriate soles). Shoes from other dance styles can be worn as well, but always keep in mind the safety points above.

							
98mm 3 1/2"	85mm 3"	85mm 3"W	75mm 2 1/2"	75mm 2 1/2"W	70mm 2 1/2"T	65mm 2 1/4"T	65mm 2 1/4"W
							
65mm 2 1/4"N	65mm 2 1/4"	55mm 2"N	55mm 2"	50mm T1	45mm 1 1/2"	35mm 1 1/3"	35mm 1 1/3"

“A sample of heel types and heights—www.dancesole.com”

8. Finally, be sure to check the dress codes of any place where you plan on dancing. Many dance studios and nightclubs will not allow tennis shoes or other shoes which make marks on the wooden floors.

Other than these guidelines, wear whatever footwear you'd like both to class and out dancing. The main goal is to be safe and comfortable while dancing and not to be at a disadvantage because of your shoes.

Although safety is the primary reason why appropriate shoes are recommended, there are some dance-specific reasons as well:

1. **Better mobility!** The more comfortable the shoe, the more securely held your foot is (with the right fit, good straps around foot and even ankle for some shoes), and the more flexible the shank (the bottom part) of the shoe, the better you'll be able to perform the range of movements that salsa requires.



“Note the secure ankle straps and heel support, Ladies!—3” heel Latin dance shoes from latinodanceshoes.com”

2. **Better turns!** The correct sole is important for performing turns on dance surfaces (often wooden floors). The most common sole on dance shoes is made of suede, which is a medium sole that allows for smooth turns, but has enough friction that you won't slip. Leather soles are often too slippery, and rubber soles are often too sticky and can be too hard to dance on in terms of the impact. Try to make sure that the soles of the shoes you plan on wearing allow you to turn with out sliding out of control or getting stuck.



“Note the suede on heel and ball of foot to assist turning, Gentlemen!—1.5” Heel Ballroom/Salsa shoes from latinodanceshoes.com”

3. **Better comfort!** Dance shoes are intended to be danced in and are therefore designed with dancers in mind making them (often) a more comfortable choice if you are planning to dance a lot (which we hope you are!). But any comfortable shoe will work, if you take into mind the other considerations on this page.
4. **Better moves!** Dance shoes are often lighter in weight than street shoes or even dress shoes for guys or girls, making it easier to navigate the dance floor. When deciding on shoes, whether dance shoes or street shoes, consider their weight.
5. **Better health!** Whatever shoes you choose, make sure that there is some padding in the insole of the shoe to help the impact of dancing and protect your ankles, knees and hips.
6. **Better style!** Although comfort and safety have been stressed, let’s not forget about style! Part of the fun of salsa dancing is the confidence to go out and dance and to present yourself to the world—a great pair of shoes, regardless of whether they’re dance shoes, can go a long way to helping you feel great while dancing!

FAQs about Dance Shoes

Q. How do I maintain my dance shoes?

- a. Especially if you have shoes with suede soles, DO NOT wear them outside, this will damage them. Special steel brushes, easily available at dance stores and online can be used to restore the nap of the suede when the soles of your shoes have become worn in or dirty from dusty or sticky floors. Try not to get your shoes wet or spill liquids on them! This will also cause problems when dancing.

Q. Is it true that I can just get suede soles put on any shoes instead of buying dance shoes?

- a. It is possible to take street shoes into a cobbler and have them re-soled with suede, but always keep in mind the safety guidelines above. It is important that whatever shoes you dance in supportive your feet and won’t hurt you or fly off and hurt anyone else.

Q. Will I be a better dancer if I wear “real” dance shoes?

a. You’ll become a better dancer by practicing as much as you can and as often as you can! As long as whatever shoes you wear are comfortable and safe, how much better you become as a dancer has little to do with what you wear and so much more to do with how much you practice and how much fun you have dancing!

IF YOU DECIDE TO BUY DANCE SHOES....

See below for a list of dance shoe providers in the Chicagoland area and online. (It’s best if you can go and spend some time trying on different shoes, especially if this is your first pair).

Also, ask us, your instructors and TAs! Take a look at our shoes, ask us questions, and please feel free to show us your new shoes! Give us feedback as well on your shoe buying experience, whether online, in a store or in a studio so that we can better suit this information to your needs. Send your thoughts to danceshoes@uchicago.edu

Where to Buy Shoes in Chicago

- Chicago Dance Supply, 5301 N. Clark St. (773) 728-5344: www.chicagodancesupply.com
 - 10% off at check-out if you’re a University of Chicago student



You can also purchase shoes at salsa nightclubs at the start of the night and at dance studios in Chicago such as these:

- Latin Street Dancing, 540 N La Salle Dr # 500, (312) 527-9006: www.laboriqua.com
- Latin Rhythms Academy of Dance and Performance, 210 N. Racine, 312.73.DANCE: salsa@latinrhythmsdance.com
- Studio Ula la, 808 W. Van Buren, (312) 474-9999: <http://www.studioulala.com>

Where To Buy Dance Shoes Online

****email danceshoes@uchicago.edu for all codes and further info on discounts****

www.ShowTimeDanceShoes.com —10% off with discount code

<http://balloshoes.homestead.com> — Stay tuned for more info on a student discount for these popular shoes! (Gentlemen especially seem to appreciate the “street shoe” quality of these shoes)

www.DanceShoesStore.com — 10% off with discount code

www.LatinDanceStore.com — 20% off everything with coupon code

www.danceshoesonline.com — 25% off with coupon code

www.championdanceshoes.com — Email danceshoes@uchicago.edu for more info on discount

<http://www.featherdanceshoes.com/shop/home.php> — Free shipping

<http://www.appliedanceshoes.com> — 10% off with promotional code

ballroomdancingshoe.com/

<http://www.dancesole.com/>

***And the list goes on....just put “salsa” and “shoes” in a search engine to find more!
Let us know which other shoe providers you had success with so that we can add them to the list.***

Happy Dancing!