

All about shoes

by the CONSUMER COUNCIL

If the shoe isn't satisfactory

If your new shoes aren't satisfactory, the best thing to do is to take them back to the shop where you bought them. The retailer is responsible for the merchantable quality of the products he sells you. If the shoe is shown to be at fault, you are entitled to a free repair, or, if the fault is caused by manufacturing defects and cannot be repaired, to replacement. You are *not* entitled to your money back and only to replacement in certain cases. If the shoes are incorrectly labelled or the salesman makes a claim that turns out to be false, this may be a violation of the Trade Descriptions Act. Take up the matter first with the shopkeeper. If this produces no results, consult your local Citizens' Advice Bureau or weights and measures inspector.

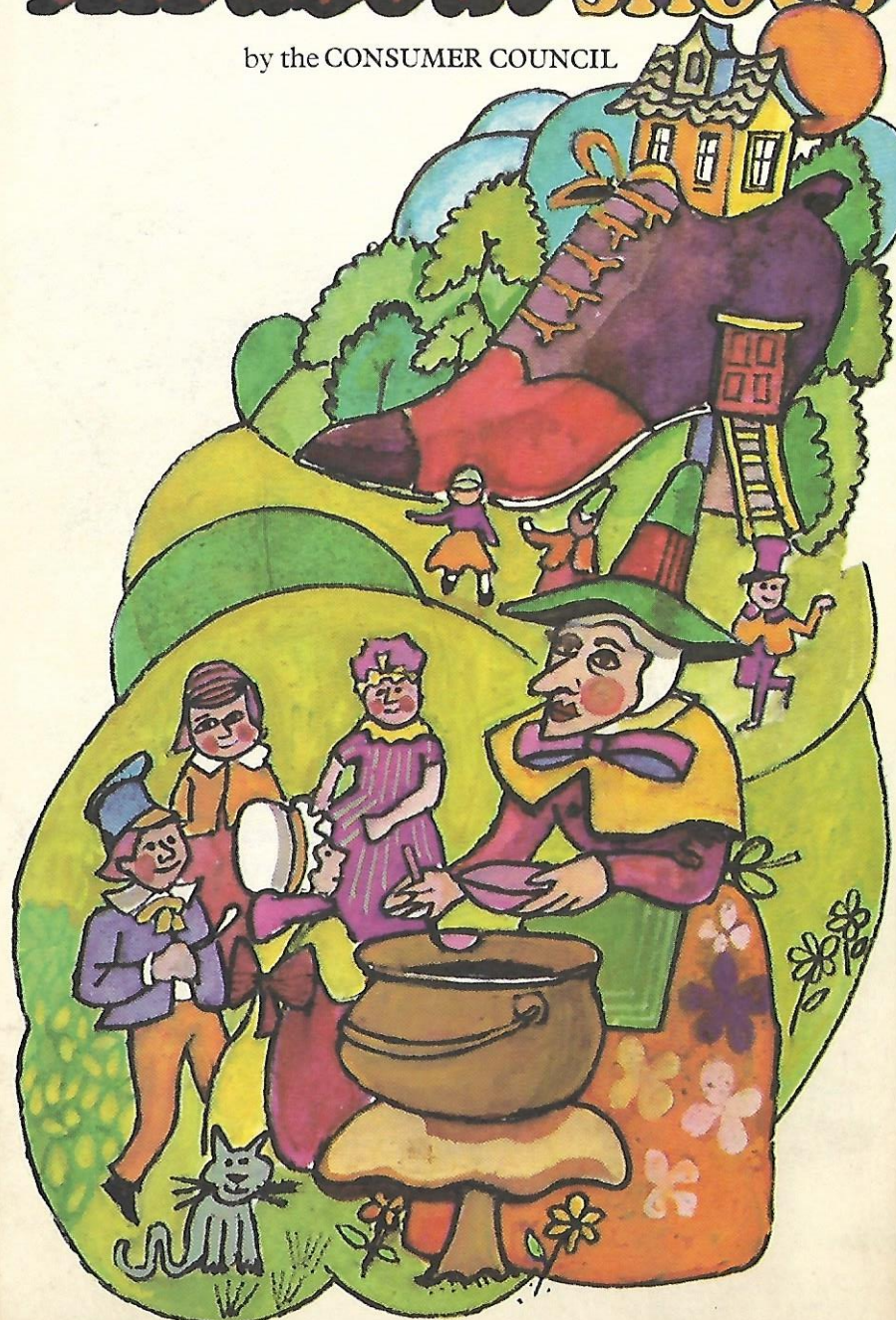
Additional information

"The Care of Boots and Shoes" series and "Children's Shoes." Shoe and Allied Trades Research Association, SATRA House, Kettering, Northants. (SA envelope essential).

Remember remember

When you're buying shoes, remember...

- * Select a shoe style suited to your purpose.
- * The way the shoe feels on your foot is more important than the size marking.
- * Ideally, children's feet should be measured by an experienced fitter.
- * Proper care of shoes can extend their life.





Buying shoes is not complicated—or is it? You can recognize all the styles and you know what you like—but how much more do you really know about shoes? Undoubtedly you wouldn't buy court shoes for long country walks. Nor would you pick Wellington boots for an evening out.

But how many of these other questions can you answer?

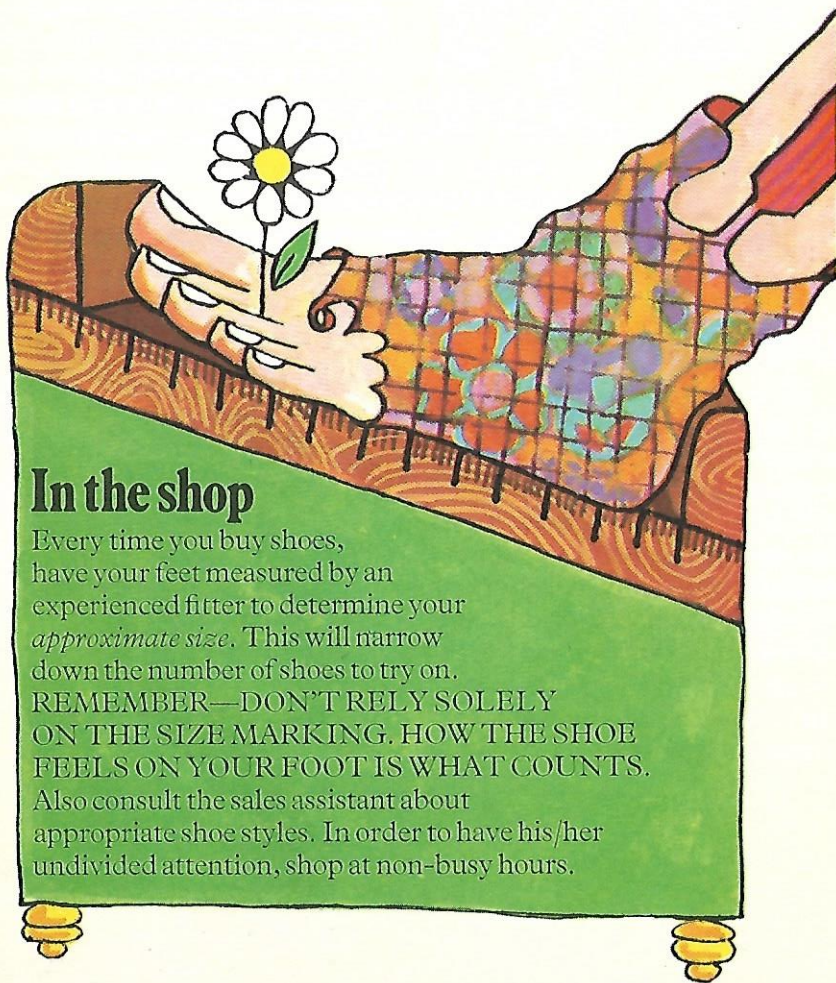
* Which style of shoe is most suited to my purpose?

* What do I consider most important? Style? Comfort?

Durability? How can I judge these qualities?

* Which of these features would I be willing to sacrifice?

* What is my correct size and fitting?



In the shop

Every time you buy shoes, have your feet measured by an experienced fitter to determine your *approximate size*. This will narrow down the number of shoes to try on.

REMEMBER—DON'T RELY SOLELY ON THE SIZE MARKING. HOW THE SHOE FEELS ON YOUR FOOT IS WHAT COUNTS.

Also consult the sales assistant about appropriate shoe styles. In order to have his/her undivided attention, shop at non-busy hours.

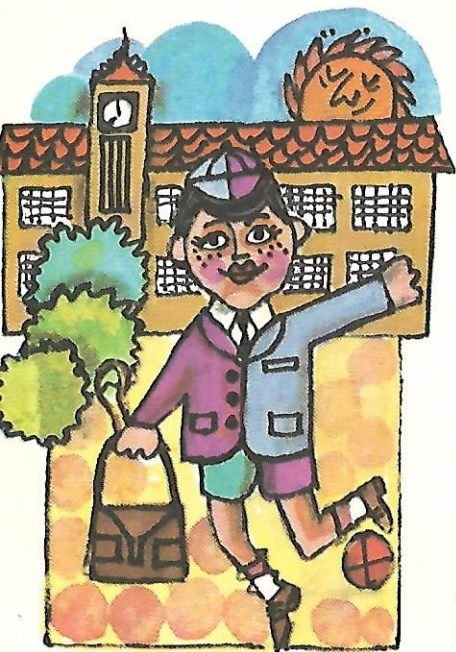
Comfort

- 1 Shoe comfort depends primarily on the correct
- (size and fitting. Shoe sizes are not standardized, so you may not
- s take the same size in every shoe. American and continental sizing
- c systems are often mixed in with British sizes. Here are a few points
- r to keep in mind.
- c * Fittings can be given in letters or numbers. The lower the number
- s or the closer the letter is to A, the narrower the fitting. AA is
- j narrower than A, while EE is wider than E. * In women's shoes,
- v there is a difference of $1\frac{1}{2}$ sizes between the British and American
- v markings. A British size 5 corresponds to an American $6\frac{1}{2}$.
- f * American men's shoes are marked $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 size larger than British
- l shoes; e.g., a British size 8 and an American size 9 are probably
- e about the same size. * The difference in length between British
- s shoe sizes for men, women, and children is a mere $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch, and
- c between half-sizes, only $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch. Do not despair. Plans for a
- uniform metric international sizing system called "Mondopoint"
- are now being developed and should be in use in several years.

How can you be sure a shoe fits properly?

- (* If your heel slips and there is a space between your foot and the
- v back of the shoe when your toe is as far forward as it will go, the shoe
- j is either too long or too wide. If the shoe has no strap and you have
- f to curl your toes up as you walk to keep the heel from slipping, it is
- s too wide. * If your toes bunch up and you can't straighten them
- s out, the shoe is too short. * If deep creases occur in the vamp
- r when your foot is bent, the shoe is too
- t deep. * In lace-up shoes, there should
- l be a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch gap at the top of the pieces
- c that lace together (facings). Overlapping
- c facings mean that the fitting is
- c too wide, permitting your
- s foot to move forward and the
- l toes to become cramped.
- f * Keep in mind any special
- l characteristics your feet have,
- t such as high insteps or pro-
- truding ankle bones. These
- i characteristics may limit the
- types of shoes you can wear.
- : It's wise to see how the shoes
- look in a mirror, as well as
- c from looking straight down.
- i If your shoes don't fit properly,
- : you may find problems with
- blisters, bunions, corns, or
- heel-bumps.



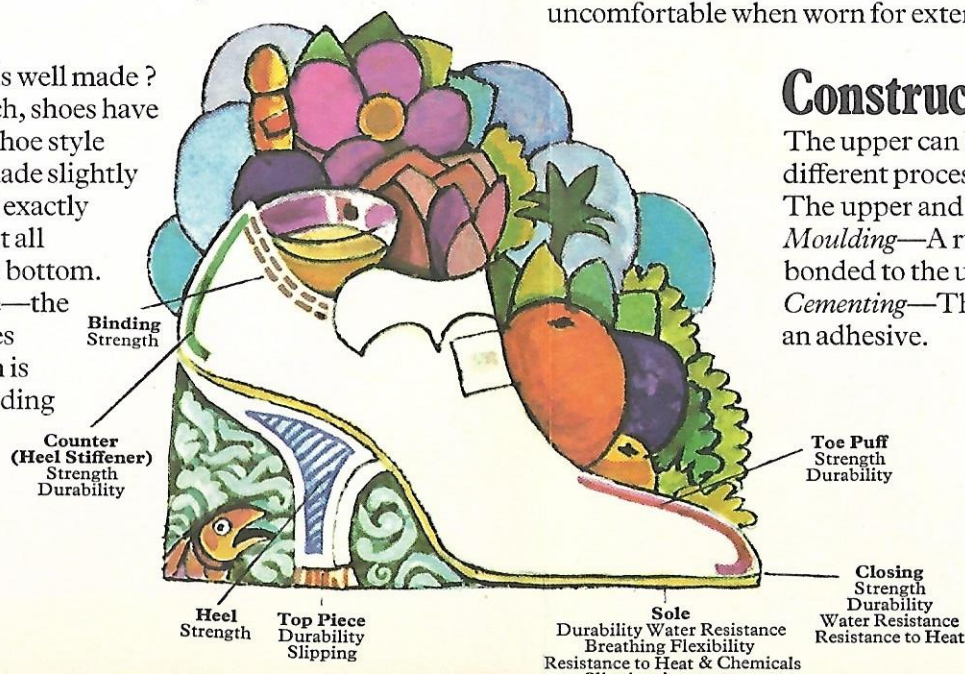


Fitting children's shoes

Because children's feet are not fully formed, they can easily be moulded into the wrong shape by badly fitting shoes. Children may not feel any pain, but a shoe may be constricting the foot and may cause a deformity later on. Children should, whenever possible, be measured by an experienced fitter every time they get new shoes or at worst they should try on new shoes before you buy. So don't buy children's shoes without the child being present to try them on. To allow room for growth and free movement, children's shoes should be at least $\frac{3}{4}$ inch longer than the longest toe and have plenty of toe room in all directions. On the other hand, shoes shouldn't be so big that their feet will slip from side to side.

Durability

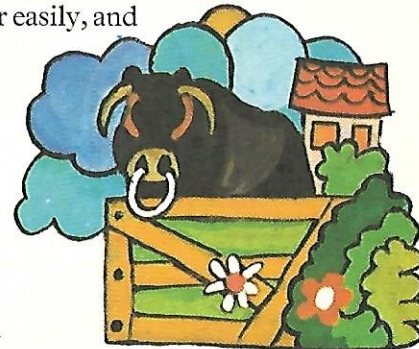
How can you tell if a shoe is well made? As you can see from the sketch, shoes have many separate pieces. Each shoe style and type of construction is made slightly differently and may not have exactly the same pieces as shown, but all shoes do have an upper and a bottom. The upper is the part you see—the section of the shoe that carries the main design. The bottom is the part below the foot, including the sole and the heel.



Shoe materials

The upper may be of leather (smooth or grain, patent, suede), synthetic (plastic-coated fabric, poromeric), or fabric. Rubber and plastic are used in Wellington boots. Shoe soles may be of rubber, leather, or plastic.

Leather is considered the traditional shoe material because it takes the shape of the foot, doesn't tear easily, and allows water vapour to pass through it. Poromerics permit air to pass through. Unlike leather, they recover their original shape rather than adapting to the shape of the foot. So, poromeric shoes should fit perfectly when you buy them; you'll never "wear them in". Plastic-coated fabrics, usually cheaper than leather or poromeric, are found mainly in low-price fashion shoes. They tend to scratch more easily than leather. As an upper material, some fabrics do not wear very well and these are generally used in evening court shoes that will be worn only occasionally. Water-repelling treatments are sometimes applied to shoes, but the only really waterproof footwear for wet or snowy weather is Wellingtons or goloshes. Remember—if footwear is impervious to water and damp, it will also prevent foot heat and perspiration from escaping. And this makes such footwear uncomfortable when worn for extended periods of time.



Construction

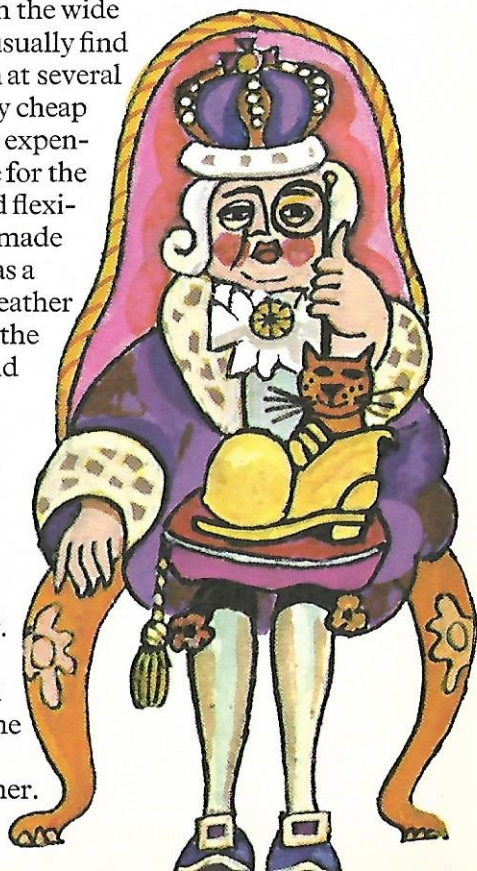
The upper can be attached to the bottom in three different processes. *Stitching* (Welting, Veldtschoen)—The upper and bottom are stitched together. *Moulding*—A rubber or plastic bottom is moulded or bonded to the upper in one operation in a heated press. *Cementing*—The bottom is attached to the upper by an adhesive.

Additional terms

Other terms you may come across in the shops are: *Aniline Dyed*—specially dyed leathers with a deep gloss, which enhances the natural characteristics of leather. *Stiffener*—a piece of stiff material built in to maintain the shape of the back part of the shoe. *Insole*—a separate layer of leather, leatherboard, or fibreboard between the foot and the outer sole. *Last*—a block of wood, plastic, or metal on which a shoe is made. *Patent*—a term which is used, loosely, to describe a shoe upper material which is very smooth and shiny. Originally, this term applied to leather with a high gloss finish based on linseed oil. Nowadays, patent leather is produced by coating leather with a polyurethane-based lacquer or laminating a thick layer of PVC to its surface. When shiny PVC is laminated to fabric, the result is often termed “vinyl patent.” *Toe Puff*—a stiffening layer built into the toe to maintain shape. *Top Piece*—the layer of the heel that touches the ground. *Vamp*—the front section of the upper.

Judging quality

Quality is difficult to measure. With the wide variety of shoes available, you can usually find just what you're looking for—often at several prices. Generally speaking, the very cheap shoe won't wear as well as the more expensive one, but it may give good value for the money. If you insist on comfort and flexibility, you may find them in a well-made light shoe that may not last as long as a cheaper, heavier shoe. Fine-grain leather costs more than coarse leather, but the coarse leather is apt to be thicker and stronger and will give better wear. Remember—when you buy high-fashion shoes, you may be paying a high price for the style rather than the durability or the comfort. Here are some characteristics of a well-made shoe. * Leather linings. * Fine, neat stitching on the upper. * Surplus material carefully trimmed away. * No rough, unfinished edges. * No prominent seams on the inside of the shoe. * Good grain matching between uppers—if leather.



Shoe care

Proper care of shoes can extend their life. Naturally, care depends on the type of upper. Smooth or aniline dyed leathers require one type of care, suede another, and patent, plastic, and poromeric, a third. Here are some do's and don'ts.

DO: Wear all shoes the first time in dry weather so a coating of dirt and small stones can build up on the sole and increase water resistance.

DO: Build up a wax film over the entire surface of *smooth leather* shoes. This will help preserve the leather, protect the surface, and minimize water marks. Leather is not waterproof, unless it is specially treated.

DO: Put some polish in the feather line (where the upper joins the bottom) of *smooth leather* shoes to protect the shoe from the wet.

DO: Use good-quality shoe polish or cream for *smooth leather* shoes and follow the instructions of the manufacturer or sales assistant.

DO: Wipe *patent leather*, *plastic-coated*, and *poromeric* shoes with a damp rag. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on polishing.

DO: Store your shoes on shoe trees or stuff them with paper to help them keep their shape.

DO: Repair your shoes when necessary. Neglected repairs, like worn heels, may cause the whole shoe to wear out early.

DO: Air your shoes after each wearing. All feet sweat, and perspiration makes leather hard and brittle and shortens its life.

DO: Brush suede shoes regularly with a suede brush or whatever type of brush is recommended.

DON'T: Dry shoes near a fire or heat source. Leather will become hard and brittle if exposed to it, especially when wet.

Instead, place wet shoes in a well-ventilated area, and stuff them with dry newspaper for an hour or two.

DON'T: Attach “stick-a-soles” without asking your shoe retailer first. They can change the balance of the shoe and may cause the original sole to pull away from the upper. Also, if you alter the shoe in this way, the shopkeeper may not accept any complaints.

