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## Choosing the best footwear for baby

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Tips on finding footwear for your little one

After testing dozens of shoes on my own little shoe-hound, we came up with a few useful guidelines to help in this tricky new world of baby footwear.

### What to look out for:

**1. Flat, non-skid soles:** It seems obvious to look for this in baby shoes but surprisingly, not all baby shoes come with flat, non-skid soles. Some even come with heels, believe it not.

Resist the urge to buy those "fun" gimmicky shoes and opt for ones that will help your little one's walking efforts better. Save the heels for her school's formal dance, mummies.

Check the bottoms and make sure that baby will have traction when she tries walking in them. Rubber soles are preferred over leather ones (unless they are properly grooved) since these provide a better grip for your little walker. If you already bought a pair that has slippery soles, you can rough them up with sandpaper or stick masking tape underneath for better stability.

**2. Flexible, breathable uppers:** Anything that will hamper baby's foot movement or even worse — affect the way he would normally walk because of stiff, painful uppers (that rub against the tops of his feet while walking) is a big no-no.

Test the shoe by bending it and see if the soles and uppers bend easily enough. Run your finger along the uppers' seams and check if there are defects/rough edges that will rub against your baby's foot and eventually cause blisters.

Take into consideration the material of the shoes as well — the more breathable the material, the more comfortable (and less hot and sweaty) it is for your little explorer.

**3. It's all in the design:** Being a shoe fiend myself, I've suffered through painful shoe moments for the sake of style and fashion. What's a little blister compared to wearing those fabulous designer heels?

But please spare your little one from a future of calluses, bunions and misaligned toes by making sure that those irresistibly adorable shoes are also baby feet-friendly. For instance, check if the design will hold in all ten toes while walking — some sandal designs come with crisscross straps across the top of the foot which allow baby's little pinky toes to peek through and get

By Kitty Ricafort for Yahoo! Southeast Asia

My little 2-year-old girl loves shoes. She actually squeals in delight whenever she sees her most favourite ones — a pair of pink glittery ballet flats she chose herself among a row of shoes at a department store — truly her mother's daughter.

After two years of being her primary shoe "buyer" and "picker," I've thankfully racked up a few tips on finding footwear I found can be the best suit your little one's fast-growing feet.

Thanks to the advice of veteran mums, our paediatrician, baby books plus trying on and

testing dozens of shoes on my own little shoe-hound, we came up with a few useful guidelines to help in this tricky new world of

baby footwear.

trapped.

Also keep in mind that novelty designs like cowboy boots or pointy-toed party shoes can mold your baby's growing feet in an unnatural shape. Take note of ankle straps, stiff ribbons, protruding rivets and any other design element that can also uncomfortably rub against your baby's skin.

**4. Roomy fit:** Since baby's feet grow every six weeks for some and three months for most — try to find shoes that leave enough allowance for growth. But be mindful that the ones you choose aren't too big since this will hamper your baby's natural walking movement as well and may cause even more tripping than usual.

To find the most ideal fit, press down between baby's big toe and the end of her shoe, if there's around ½ inch of space there, that's perfect. To check the width, pinch the shoe at its widest, if you can feel a bit of baby's foot, that's good, if all you can feel the shoe, it's too wide — but if all you feel are baby's feet, it's too narrow.

It's also best to have baby standing up while trying on shoes, since this will give a better indication of fit on all sides of the shoe — top, sides, and length. Also make sure that the back of the shoe doesn't come up too high, or has protruding seams that may rub against your baby's heels. Insert your pinky behind your baby's heel and check if there's enough space. If it's too tight or too loose, it could cause future discomfort.

Finally, check baby's shoe fit every few weeks or so, if red pressure marks start appearing, it's time to shop for a new pair. If you intend to put socks on with a pair, bring the socks to the store fitting to guarantee you get the perfect fit with them.

**5. Have variety:** Experts recommend that walking barefoot is still what's best for a growing baby's feet, but since safety and society make it necessary to wear footwear, try to have a suitable range of styles to give baby's feet a break from the same old confines of just one style.

It's ideal to have a pair of airy sandals for hot days, close-toed ones for a cooler climate or more formal affairs and easy-to-wear rubber-soled slip-ons for those days at home.

Remember, it doesn't have to be expensive to be a good shoe. It just takes a bit of research and a keen sense of mummy diligence to find the best footwear for your excited walker.

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