

CHECKLIST: HOW TO BUY MEN'S SHOES

_____ Step 1: Figure Your Size

If you already know your shoe size, you're done here — skip to the next step. If not, you can either go to a shoe store with trained service that can measure for you, or you can follow these step-by-step instructions to measuring at home:

_____ Tape a blank sheet of paper (regular printer size is fine) to the floor

_____ Put on the type of sock you'll usually wear with the shoes you plan to buy (so that you're taking the sock width into the measurement)

_____ Place your foot on the paper (at an angle if necessary) and bend slightly forward, so that your knee is further forward than the shin below it.

_____ Trace the outline of your foot. The drawing tip of your pen or pencil should be snug up against the sock, not pushed out from it.

_____ Now use a ruler to draw straight lines that just touch the outermost points on each side: front, back, right side, and left side. You don't need to extend the lines until they cross, but if you did they'd make a long, narrow trapezoid.

_____ Take your measurements, rounded to the nearest 1/16":

o Length (from the front line to the back line): _____

o Width (from the right line to the left line): _____

_____ Repeat all the above steps for your other foot, and use the larger measurements. Most people have one foot slightly larger than the other, and you want the shoes you buy to fit your largest foot.

Use the following charts to convert inches to U.S. shoe sizes. The first chart converts the length in inches to a numerical size, while the second uses the shoe size and the width in inches to assign a shoe width, expressed as a number. The combination — 9D, 14E, etc. — is your full shoe size.

Length in Inches to U.S. Shoe Size Conversion

Length in Inches U.S. Shoe Size

9.31	6
9.5	6.5
9.69	7
9.81	7.5
10	8
10.19	8.5
10.31	9
10.5	9.5
10.69	10
10.81	10.5
11	11

11.19	11.5
11.31	12
11.5	12.5
11.69	13
11.81	13.5
12	14
12.19	14.5
12.61	15

Width in Inches to Shoe Width Conversion, by U.S. Shoe Size

U.S. Shoe Size C (Narrow) D (Standard) E (Wide)

6	3.3"	3.5"	3.7"
6.5	3.3"	3.6"	3.8"
7	3.4"	3.6"	3.8"
7.5	3.4"	3.7"	3.9"
8	3.5"	3.8"	3.9"
8.5	3.6"	3.8"	4.0"
9	3.6"	3.9"	4.1"
9.5	3.7"	3.9"	4.1"
10	3.8"	4.0"	4.2"
10.5	3.8"	4.1"	4.3"
11	3.9"	4.1"	4.3"
11.5	3.9"	4.2"	4.4"
12	4.0"	4.3"	4.4"
12.5	4.1"	4.3"	4.5"
13	4.1"	4.4"	4.6"
13.5	4.2"	4.4"	4.8"
14	4.2"	4.5"	4.9"
14.5	4.3"	4.6"	4.9"
15	4.3"	4.6"	5.0"

Step 2: Identify the Shoes You Want

Select a material

- o Leather w/leather sole — dress shoe standard
- o Leather w/rubber sole — traditional “work shoe”
- o Exotic leather (usually only for social wear, not business)
- o Canvas/cloth uppers (skate shoes, espadrilles, etc.)
- o Rubber/synthetic uppers (athletic shoes, etc.)

Select a style

- o Oxford/balmoral — highest business formality dress shoe
- o Blucher/derby — slightly more casual business style
- o Brogue — casual, decorated leather shoe
- o Wingtip — heavily decorated casual style
- o Saddle shoe — casual style; usually two-tone

- o Dress boot — high-ankled leather shoe
- o Loafer/driving shoe/moccasin — slip-on leather shoe
- o Boater — leather upper with crepe rubber sole slip-on
- o Sneaker — soft, rubber-soled casual shoe
- o Athletic shoe — multi-piece casual shoe, often with breathable mesh
- o Work boot — thick rubber sole with high leather or synthetic uppers
- o Sandal — open-toed casual summer style

_____ Select a color

- o Black — highest business formality standard
- o Dark brown — acceptable for some business wear
- o Oxblood/burgundy — acceptable for some business wear
- o Light brown — casual/social color for leather
- o Two-tone — decorative, casual style
- o White — flashy dress style (white bucks, etc.)
- o Dark blues, greens, purples, etc. — sometimes seen on suede shoes
- o Bright colors — usually reserved for athletic shoes, sneakers, etc.

The combination of material, style, and color gives you a very specific shopping target. Once you can narrow a store's selection down to something like "a dark brown leather brogue," there should only be a manageable amount of shoes left to choose from.

_____ **Step 3: Pick Your Source**

_____ Select one or more of the following sources for footwear:

- o Department stores — cheap, but limited selection/quality
- o Chain shoe stores (DSW, etc) — cheap, with a wide selection, but mixed quality
- o Boutique shoe stores — limited selection and high prices, but often select only high-quality stock
- o Bespoke cobblers — custom-made shoes; very expensive but generally the sturdiest and most comfortable shoes available
- o Online shopping — easy and wide selection, but may take several exchanges for sizing

_____ **Step 4: Go Shopping**

_____ Go to your target store or source for footwear (as chosen in Step 3)

_____ Identify the shoes that match your chosen style (from Step 2)

_____ Select the ones in your size (from Step 1)

These are your options! Hopefully, you should have narrowed the selection down to just a few pairs of shoes. If the store doesn't have any that quite suit you, move on — with your checklist, it's easy to browse multiple stores in a short period of time.

With shoes, be sure to try them on and walk around the store a bit even if you find a pair you like in exactly your size. Not all companies construct their sizes in exactly the same way.