

Tap Shoes

One of the most important skills a tap dancer needs to learn is how to choose the right pair of tap shoes. Once you begin tap shoe shopping, you will see that there are many different styles available. Use the following guide to help you find the perfect pair of tap shoes according to style, fit and sound.

Tap Shoe Style

Tap shoes are available in a variety of shapes, styles and colours. They are generally made of four materials: leather, canvas, wood and plastic. Heels are also available if preferred, but tend to be a little more difficult to balance on, as they place more weight on the ball of the foot and the toes. More advanced dancers usually opt for split-sole jazz tap shoes, which allow more flexibility for performing advanced tap steps.

Tap Shoe Fit

Overall comfort and fit is extremely important when purchasing tap shoes. If the tap shoes don't fit perfectly, tap sounds won't be clear and precise. Keep in mind that tap shoe sizes may be quite different than street shoes sizes. If you are not sure of two sizes, opt for the smaller size. Tap shoes should always fit snugly, with very little space in the toe box. With frequent use, the shoes will stretch and allow more room for your feet.

Tap Shoe Sound

When choosing tap shoes, it's just as important to consider how they sound as how they look and feel. The shoes differ by the amount of screws attached to the taps. The screws are also adjustable, so different sounds can be produced. Tap dancers often loosen or tighten screws to adjust the sound made by the taps. After dancing for a while, dancers develop a personal preference for a certain tap sound.

Buying Tap Shoes

Tap shoes may be purchased at dance supply shops. If you're buying your first pair of tap shoes, however, it's best to try them on. As with fitting any type of shoes, be sure to wear the same type of socks or tights you will wear while dancing. Walk around in the shoes and try a few tap steps and foot stretches.