

“GIVE A GIRL THE RIGHT SHOES, AND SHE CAN CONQUER THE WORLD.”

Quote By Marilyn Monroe

I often get asked: “What are the best shoes for Never Stop Dancing classes?” I am certainly no shoe expert, but I can share what I look for when buying shoes for class.

1. Light and flexible

Ideally shoes for dance fitness should be reasonably light and flexible. I say *reasonably*, because there is a relationship between lightness and flexibility, and cushioning. In my experience, a shoe designed specifically for dancing will be very light and flexible, but may not have quite enough cushioning for dance fitness. Running shoes on the other hand, have great cushioning, but are designed for running outdoors, so they are heavy, not very flexible (in fact they restrict certain sideways movements), and are far too grippy. Personally I prefer a light cross-trainer.



Dance Shoe
Light and Flexible, but very little cushioning



Running Shoe
Lots of cushioning, but too heavy, too grippy, and restricts movement



Cross Trainer
More cushioning than dance shoes but lighter and more flexible than running shoes

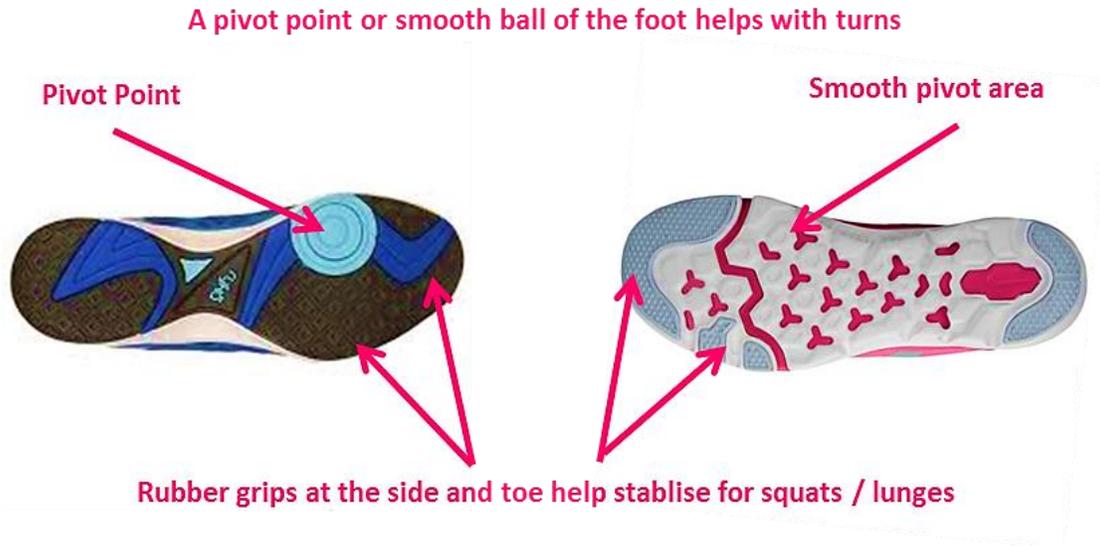
2. Will allow turning and pivoting on the ball of the foot

In a NSD class we pivot and turn. Shoes designed for outdoor activities (walking, running or hiking) are likely to be too grippy on the sole for dance fitness. You risk injuring yourself because your body (and in particular your knees and/or ankles) turn, but your foot stays put – ouch!! It is good to look for a shoe that has a pivot point, or has an area on the ball of the foot that is smooth or not too grippy (see image below).

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3. Grip on sides and tips for squats and lunges

Personally, I quite like a shoe that has rubber grips on the sides of the ball of the foot, and on the toe. These grips stop you slipping when you are doing squats or lunges, or sideways movements generally (see image below).



4. Cushioning and Support

I like to jump around a bit, so I like shoes that have a reasonable amount of cushioning, but are still light. Many shoes that are sold as dance or aerobics shoes just don't have quite enough cushioning (for me, personally). When I try on shoes I jump around in the shop, to try to judge if a shoe has sufficient cushioning 😊. Of course, orthotics, or off-the-shelf insoles, or even supportive socks, may help if your shoes don't give you all the cushioning you need.

In terms of support, try to find a shoe that supports the arch of your foot. If your feet have a tendency to roll out or in, then you may wish to consider whether the cradle – the part that wraps around the middle of your foot and is pulled together by the laces – is actually supporting your foot, or just looking pretty 😊.



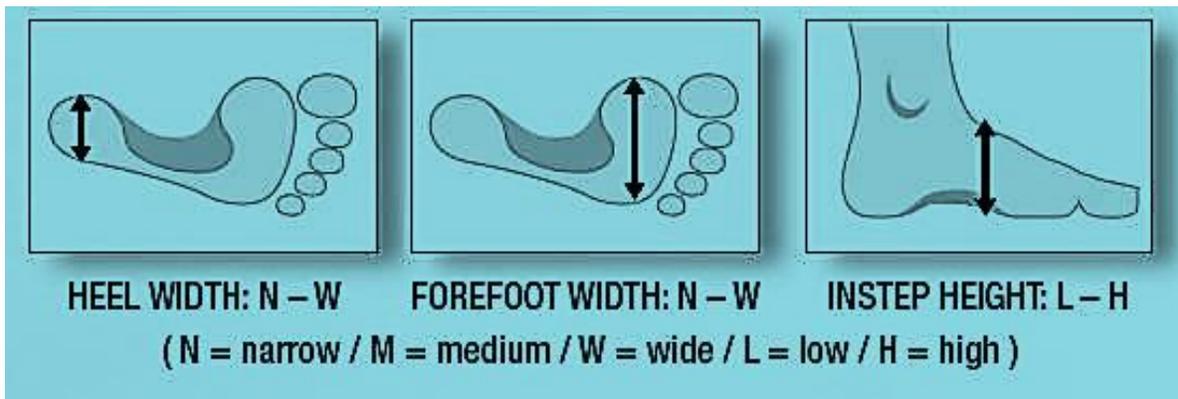
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5. Fit for your Foot

Different brands and even ranges within brands work better for different shaped feet. If you can, try the shoes on before you buy, and jump up and down a bit. When your foot lands on the ground from a jump or hop, does it:

- feel constrained or restricted by the shoe (the shoe may not be wide enough); or
- slide around or not even touch the sides (the shoe may be too wide).

Remember to try both shoes on, as you may be like me and have one foot that is wider than the other 😊.



6. Style / Design

I like bright shoes because it makes it easier for people in the class to see what my feet are doing. Basically, if you find a shoe that works for you in terms of criteria 1-5 above, then look for a colour or design that makes you smile 😊 😊.



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Summary

In summary, when I look for shoes for Never Stop Dancing classes, I consider the following (not necessarily in this order):

- Is the shoe **light and flexible**?
- Does the shoe have a **pivot point or smooth area** on the ball of the foot – for easy pivots / turns?
- Does the shoe have **grip on the outer edge and toe** for stability during squats / lunges?
- Does the shoe have sufficient **cushioning and support** for when I jump around?
- Does the shoe **fit the shape and width** of my foot, especially when I jump around?
- Does the **style and design** make me smile 😊 ?

Happy shoe shopping 😊 😊!