

## DANCE SHOES: SEEKING A SOLE MATE

### *Advice about finding the right dance shoes*

- Choosing Compatible Soles

The choice of hard leather, soft leather or suede soles is an individual one, based on your feet, your preference, and your budget. Soft leather soles (like Jazz shoes) give you more contact with the floor, glide well enough, and are usually cheaper. However, they offer little support for your feet and may be too soft for some people. Smooth (or hard) leather soles give more “springiness” to your feet and can have good built-in support. They usually last longer than soft-soled shoes. Some people find spinning and gliding across the floor easier with hard leather soles. Soft suede soles, which glide softly on wood floors, are the kind found on traditional competition ballroom shoes (for both men and women). Suede soles can be glued onto many non-traditional shoes. However, they are easily ruined by wearing them outdoors or getting them wet. Try various shoes and soles – spin, triple step, and glide – and choose a sole compatible with yours.

- Searching the Ready-Made Market

Plain basic (black) shoes made for dancing are available for approximately \$50-90 (or more) at several stores in the Puget Sound area (see specific list below). Men have choices of hard, soft or suede leather soles in two styles: rounded toe or elongated shape. Women have three choices at the basic level. Jazz shoes (very flat) have soft leather soles only. The Oxford flat has hard leather or suede soles, and the Character shoe has a choice of soles, with 1.5” or 2” heel. More selection and fashion styles and colors are available for both men and women with European style ballroom dance shoes at some stores. These usually cost more.

- Finding an Individual Fit with a Customized Shoe

Custom-made shoes are available at Art's Dance Shop in Kirkland, specializing in dance shoes, both readymade and custom-made. Costs vary depending on choice of leather, fashion, etc. If you have a problem foot, this may be a very reasonable solution.

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- **Converting a Street Sole**

“Street shoes” are any ready-made shoes not specifically made for dance but adaptable to becoming your designated dance shoes. You can buy that favorite brand that fits so well! Check the soles. Leather, of course, is best, but some hard plastic soles will work, as long as no black marks appear on wood floors. Rubber doesn't work. Hard leather or suede soles can be glued by a cobbler to manmade soles, even to some athletic shoes. The cost is usually between \$10-25. It is worth it, since the shoes will last a long time if you save them just for dancing.

- **The Creative Sole-ution**

For those on a tight budget, or those who want more than one pair of dance shoes, or those who just like doing things their way -- try creating your own soles. A piece of good leather (e.g. from Tandy Leather Company) and barge cement are the ingredients. Trace the sole of the shoe on the leather and cut it out. Rough up the current soles of the shoes with sandpaper or by scraping. Apply barge cement on both the bottom of the shoe and the leather. Let dry, then align and push together. Let the shoes dry. Trim. Dance!

- **Maintaining Your Long-Term Relationship**

For best results use shoe trees, carry your shoes in a shoe bag, don't let the soles get wet, and never wear them outdoors. (Real life should be so easy!) Happy Dancing!

### *LOCAL SHOPS FOR DANCE SHOES*

This list is for information only, not promotion of particular shops. We suggest you call first.

**[Arabesque Dance Shop](#)**

22811 100th Ave. W

Edmonds

(425) 771-4525

Character shoes (smooth leather or suede soles) \$50-100 Jazz shoes (suede soles) \$55-up.

**Art's Dance Shop**

Kirkland

(425) 814-9191

Art is retired, but still takes some orders for custom-made shoes – specifically for dancing, smooth leather or soft leather, specialty fits for problem feet, \$120-130 - up.

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**[Bobillot Dance Shoes](#)** • **[Kathi Bobillot](#)**

(425) 889-8000

Local distributor of very fine shoes. By appointment only. Ballroom and Latin: \$85 to \$95. Dance Sneakers: \$55.

**[Center Stage Dance Shop](#)**

5012 University Way NE

Seattle

(206) 527-4697

Jazz shoes (soft soles) - women's \$50, men's \$65 Character shoes and flats, women and men's styles, \$50-75.

**[The Dancing Shoe](#)**

15207 6th SW

Burien, WA 98166

(206) 246-4986

Quality brands of men's and women's character shoes. Jazz and practice shoes.

**[Emerald City Dance Boutique](#)**

online only

(206) 406-3904

Wide variety of European style ballroom dance shoes, \$99 - up.

**[Petticoat Junction Dance Shop](#)**

14523 Hwy 99

Lynnwood

(425) 743-9513

Jazz and practice shoes, suede soles, flats, \$40-50. Wide range of ballroom dance shoes, soft and smooth, \$85-95 - up.

**[Rubaiyat Hand Made Shoes](#)**

By appointment

(206) 903-0130

Handmade shoes in patterns and styles of your choosing, suede or smooth leather. Prices depend on shape, style, leathers, heel height. Range from \$135 - up.