

LadySport

3545 West 4th Avenue
Vancouver, BC
604-733-1173
www.ladysport.ca

FitFirst Footwear

3713 Kensington Avenue
Burnaby, BC
604-299-8851
www.fitfirst.ca

What Makes a Great Tennis Shoe?

By Phil Moore

Tennis shoes are not unlike any other item you wear for sport. The most important thing to consider when shopping for a new shoe is "THE FIT"! If you have a very narrow or extremely wide foot, you will likely get directed to a company like New Balance as their shoes come in multiple widths. Once you find a few shoes that are comfortable, then start to focus on some of the key technical differences. For instance, a durable outsole for toe draggers, leather uppers for added support, and mesh uppers for breathability. However, there is one critical technical feature to consider that shoe designers often omit in order to create cleaner lines and better aestheticsor so they say!

This feature is called a "cupsole".

Many of you might remember the Adidas Stan Smith shoe. A tennis gear staple from the early '80s. It featured a leather upper with a full 360° foot frame or cupsole. Your foot sat inside a supportive casing, thus maximizing lateral support. There was little or no cushioning in this classic Adidas shoe, but for lateral support it was quite effective! By sitting your foot inside this rubber frame, your foot could not easily slide off the base of the shoe. Given that there is tremendous torque on a tennis shoe when a player is running, stopping quickly and attempting to sprint back in the other direction. This feature would can easily set one court shoe apart from the rest! Without some kind of rubber or foam casing at the ball of the foot, a player is susceptible to going over on the ankle (inversion sprain). Additionally, if the foot is allowed to slide off the side of the shoe, the player's ability to stop and quickly recover is severely compromised.

Today, well-designed tennis shoes have some cupsoling in strategic areas of the shoe like in the lateral forefoot near the base of the fifth toe. (See pictures attached)

Test your own shoes! Put your tennis duds on get in a good athletic position on the balls of your feet and move laterally! Feel whether the shoe keeps your foot supported, allowing you to push off effectively in the opposite direction, without either rolling your ankle or having to take an extra stutter step to recover.

Here are a couple of key models that have this feature:



K-Swiss Bigshot Light



Asics Gel Resolution 5

Look for them to keep your ankles healthy and get that extra jump on the ball...you may just be quicker than you think!