



HOW TO CHOOSE ROCK CLIMBING SHOES

Type, Features & Fit

Climbing shoe type: Choose between neutral, moderate and aggressive shoes depending on what kind of climbing you intend to do.

Climbing shoe features: Features like laces, straps, linings and rubber affect the performance of a shoe.

Climbing shoe fit: For the best performance, climbing shoes should fit snug but not painfully. Getting the right fit will help you climb harder and longer.

Climbing Shoe Type

NEUTRAL These shoes offer a relaxed fit for all-day comfort. They allow your toes to lie flat inside the shoes. Because they tend to be more comfortable, neutral shoes are a great choice for beginner climbers, but they're also good for experienced climbers who want comfortable, all-day shoes for long multi-pitch climbs.

Pros:

- Provide all-day comfort
- Often feature medium-to-stiff midsoles and thick rubber soles for good support
- Relatively flat profile makes them good for slotting into cracks

Cons:

- Thicker, stiffer soles are less sensitive than the thinner soles on moderate and aggressive shoes
- Relaxed, comfortable fit is not designed for difficult overhanging routes

MODERATE Moderate shoes are distinguished by their slightly downturned shape (also called camber) that makes them good for technical climbing. These all-purpose shoes can handle slab routes, crack climbs, long multi-pitch climbs and slightly overhung sport routes.



Pros:

- Downturned shape puts your feet into a stronger, more powerful position than neutral shoes, helping you climb more challenging routes
- Typically have stickier rubber and thinner soles than neutral shoes for better grip and feel
- More comfortable than aggressive shoes

Cons:

- Not as performance-oriented as aggressive shoes, making them less suited for very overhung routes and challenging boulder problems
- Less comfortable than neutral shoes
- Stickier rubber and thinner soles wear faster than rubber on neutral shoes

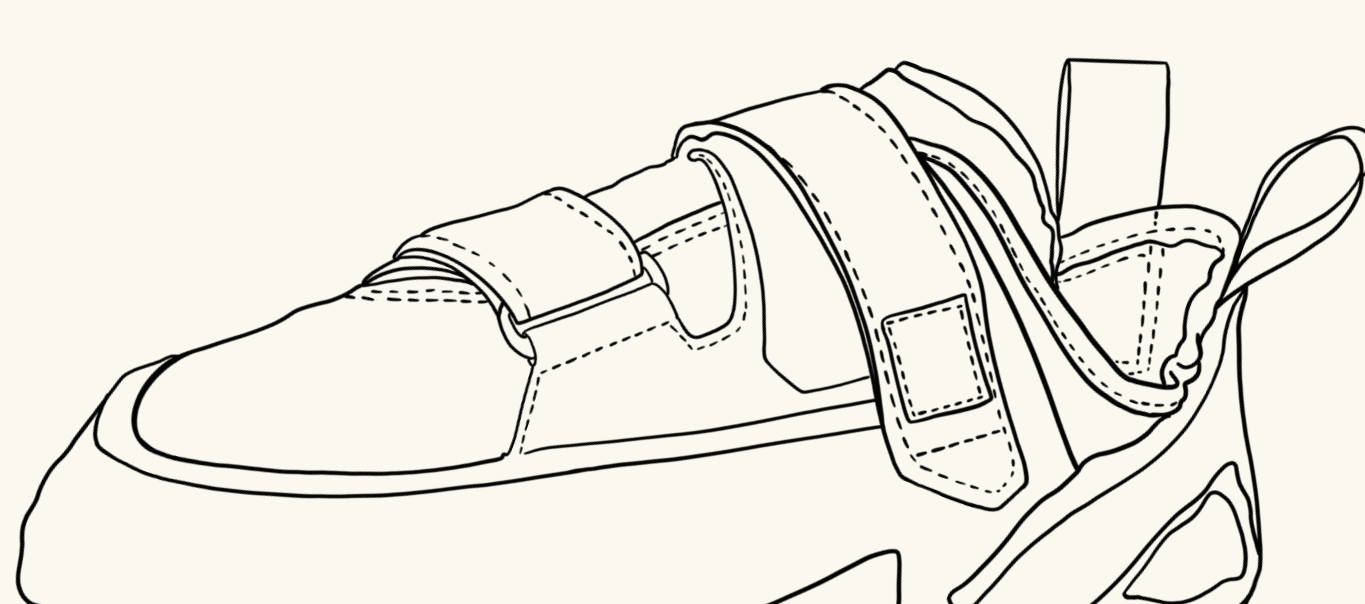
AGGRESSIVE These shoes have very downturned toes and lots of heel tension to put your feet in a strong and powerful position for challenging overhanging climbs. Most aggressive shoes have an asymmetric shape that curves toward the big toe, focusing power over the toe for precise placements on small holds. Because of the snug fit and downturned shape, climbers typically wear aggressive shoes for single-pitch sport climbs and routes at the gym rather than all-day multi-pitch climbs.

Pros:

- Very downturned shape puts your feet in a strong, powerful position for overhanging sport climbs, routes at the gym and boulder problems
- Typically have stickier rubber and thinner soles than neutral shoes for better grip and feel

Cons:

- Less comfortable than moderate and neutral shoes
- Downturn shape doesn't fit into cracks as well or smear as well as neutral and moderate shoes
- Stickier rubber and thinner soles wear faster than rubber on neutral shoes



Fit Tips

Shop in the afternoon: Your feet can swell up to a full size during the day. Go for a walk, run or, better yet, climb before you shop.



The only sure way is to try them on: Ideally, you should shop in person so you can easily try on multiple sizes. If you are buying online, order more than one size and return what doesn't fit. Try on shoes at home to make sure there are no hotspots.

Be flexible when it comes to size: there is no rock-shoe sizing standard, and everybody's feet are different

Know what fit you want: Rock shoes do not need to fit painfully—in fact, foot pain will prevent you from climbing to your full potential and may cause problems like blisters, bunions and calluses.

GENERAL RULES

- ✓ Avoid shoes that have dead space between your toes and the inside of the shoe since the shoe will not stay rigid when you place your toes on a foothold.
- ✓ Make sure your toes are flat or comfortably curved and that your toe knuckles aren't bunched painfully against the top of the shoe.
- ✓ Your heel should have a snug fit. When you are standing on your toe, ensure the back of the shoe doesn't pinch the bottom of your Achilles tendon.
- ✓ Everyone's feet bend differently, but if a shoe is difficult to slip on your foot, it is probably too tight.
- ✓ In general, the higher performance the shoe, the tighter the fit.



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