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WORLD OF WONDER PAGES!

WORLD OF WONDER

Exploring the realms of history, science, nature and technology

SHOES

Shoes have been both a necessity and a fashion statement throughout much of history. We wear them every day, but give little thought to how they have developed over time. The designs and materials used to make shoes have evolved dramatically over thousands of years.

Pattens, 1755
Pattens are protective over-shoes that first appeared the Middle Ages.

Modern shoestrings and grommets were invented in England in 1790.

Ladies' heavily embroidered French shoe with high heel, 1780s

Ladies' lace-up day boot, 1880s

Prehistoric footwear

The first shoes were baglike wrappings of animal fur or skin. Cave paintings from 8000 B.C. show people wearing these kinds of shoes.

The earliest European shoes ever found were worn by **Oetzi**, the "Ice Man," in 3000 B.C. This man was found frozen in the Alps wearing sophisticated shoes.

Sandals

Sandals are some of the earliest and most common footwear found in warm climates.

In Egypt, evidence of sandals dates back to about 3000 B.C. They were made with soles of leather, papyrus or palm.

The ancient Greeks wore a variety of shoes and sandals. The **krepis** was a mixture of a sandal and a center-laced shoe. The **krepis** was important to the development of modern shoes because it had a separate sole attached to the shoe. This allowed the sole to be replaced after it had worn out.

Social status

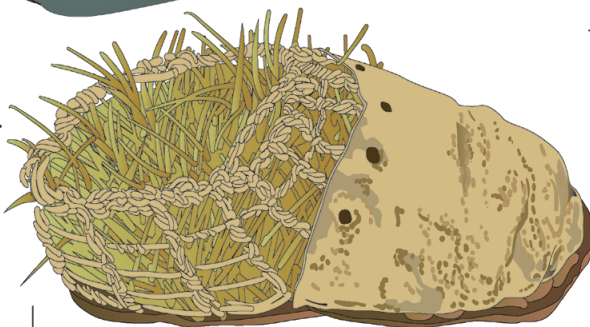
Shoes quickly became more than functional; they became fashion statements. Evidence suggests that early Roman children wore shoes that reflected their parents' place in society. Children of well-to-do families wore fancier shoes than soldiers or commoners.

Kings often dictated fashion and made laws that controlled the color, height and even the width of shoes. **Louis XIV of France** made high heels mandatory for men.

Shoes have served to reflect gender, class, race and ethnicity. They have even been seen as symbols of sexuality and fertility.

High heels

Heels have sometimes been so high that the wearer needed assistance to walk. Models in a 2010 fashion show refused to wear 10-inch heels because they were too dangerous. Heels may seem fashionable and attractive, but they are very bad for the foot and cause a variety of problems.



Reconstructed shoes of Oetzi, the "Ice Man," c. 3000 B.C.
The inner shoe is made of plant fiber netting, which held grass cushion and insulation in place. The upper shoe is made with deerskin, and the soles are bearskin rawhide.



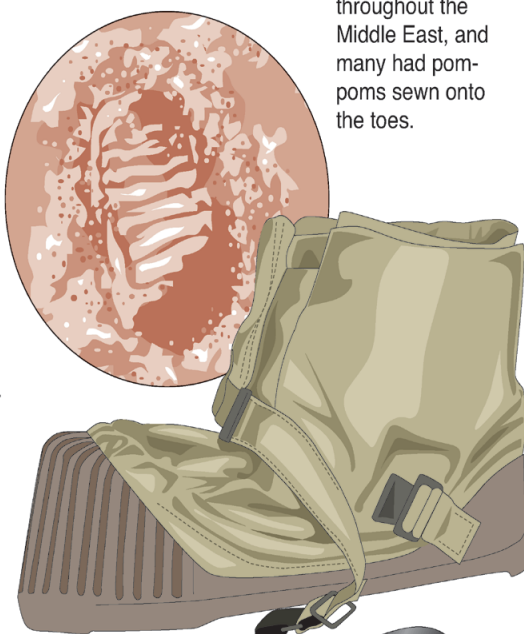
Shoes with upturned, pointed toes were popular among the Syrians and Sumerians. The style was popular throughout the Middle East, and many had pom-poms sewn onto the toes.

"One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." — Neil Armstrong, the first man to walk on the moon

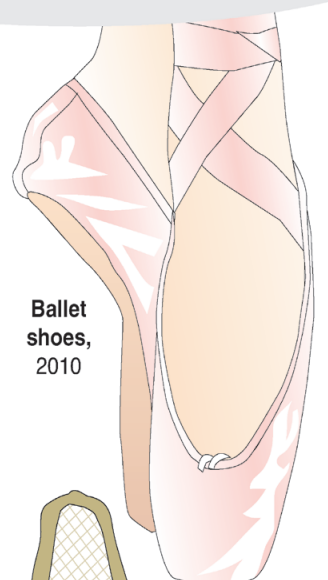
Armstrong's moon-walking boots were left in space when he returned to Earth, to avoid potential contamination.

Neil Armstrong's moon boot, 1969

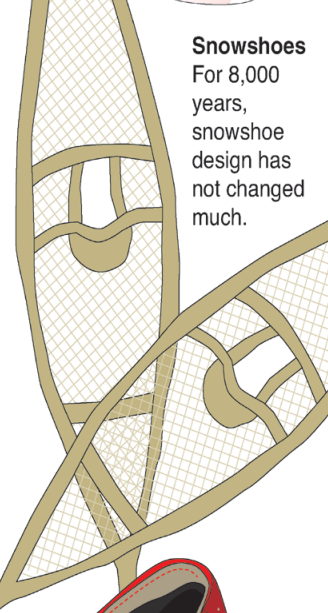
General Electric scientists developed the Apollo 11 moon boots.



Ladies' tap shoes, 1990s



Ballet shoes, 2010



Snowshoes
For 8,000 years, snowshoe design has not changed much.



High heels, 2015



Flamenco dancing shoes or zapatos de baile, 2015
The toe and wooden heel are fitted with dozens of little nails. Flamenco shoes produce a clicking or brushing sound during the dance.



Dorothy's ruby slippers, 1939
Several pairs of slippers were made for the movie "The Wizard of Oz"; four are known to exist today. This pair is in the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C.

Working shoes

Shoes have been made to address the needs of many people. **Wooden clogs** were used by the Dutch because leather shoes did not do well in marshy regions. At one time, high heels served a practical purpose for butchers who wanted to avoid the blood on their floors. **Snowshoes** were developed by Native Americans who needed to cross land covered in snow. A variety of different **dancing shoes** have evolved to allow artists to achieve unique sounds and moves. Modern **work boots**, or construction boots, are made of durable materials, and some have metal toes to protect the foot from falling objects.

Did you know?

The **Bata Shoe Museum** in Toronto displays shoes spanning more than 4,500 years.

There was no such thing as a right-footed shoe until 1818, when a shop in Philadelphia developed a right and a left shoe. By the 1850s, left and right shoes were the norm.

In Hungary, the groom drinks a toast to the bride out of her wedding shoe.

The most expensive shoes ever sold were the **ruby slippers** worn by Judy Garland in "The Wizard of Oz." They once sold at an auction for \$28 million.

In 1858, American inventor Lyman Reed Blake received a patent for a machine that sewed the soles of shoes to the uppers.

The modern shoestring (string and shoe holes) was first invented in England in 1790. Before shoestrings, shoes were commonly fastened with buckles.

The first rubber heel for shoes was patented on January 24, 1899, by Irish-American Humphrey O'Sullivan.

Keds were the world's first sneakers. These canvas-topped, rubber-soled shoes came onto the market in 1917.

SOURCES: World Book Encyclopedia, World Book Inc.; <http://www.livescience.com>; www.articlesonhistory.com; <http://www.factretriever.com>

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