



# The Adaptive Shoe List

Tips for finding shoes and socks to go with braces, and the brands that make them, for kids and adults.

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## Shoes

**Why is this important?** The shoe is a *very critical* part of the “brace-shoe” unit. The right shoe makes all the difference, not only in ease of putting on and taking off, but also in standing/walking ability.

1. **Wide: go wider, not bigger.** If a brace feels snug, search for a wider width or a style with a wide, roomy toe box rather than buying a larger shoe size. Shoes that are too long can cause tripping and won't support the brace properly. A narrow toe box can squish toes.

**Pro-tip:** Shopping for adult sizes? Men's shoes are built wider than women's and can offer that extra room you need!

2. **Deep: create more depth.** Take out the shoe's built-in inner sole on the side with the brace so the orthotic fits comfortably deep inside.

**Pro-tip:** Wearing a brace on just one side? Place the extra insert into the non-brace shoe to help keep leg lengths level.

3. **Large opening: choose generous openings.** Look for footwear with a deep entry or an extra-long tongue that pulls way back. Opening up the top of the shoe gives you plenty of room to slip the foot and brace inside smoothly without any tugging.

**Pro-tip:** Loosen the shoelaces or Velcro straps as wide as you can get.

4. **Try shoes on!** Try on lots of shoes: the shoe needs to fit with the foot and brace in it. This will help you understand which features work best for your brace. When you have the brace, measure the brace. When shopping online, use the size chart/foot measurements, as sizes can vary by brand. Orthopedic brands tend to run large.

**Pro-tip:** Buying online? Check how easy they are to return.



An extended tongue creates a wider and deeper opening, allowing for easier insertion of the brace

## Socks

**Why is this important?** Moisture can accumulate between the skin and the brace and cause skin maceration, or set the stage for fungal or other skin infections/inflammation. Socks wick moisture and sweat away, and also protect skin from rubbing and blisters.

1. **Smooth sock layer.** Always put a snug, comfortable sock under the brace to protect skin. Avoid any bunching, folds, or bulky seams, and make sure the heel of the sock aligns neatly with the heel of the foot to prevent rubbing and chafing.
2. **Pick tall socks.** Ensure the sock reaches above the top edge of the brace. The brace should not make contact with skin, as this can rub and cause blisters.

**The fold-over trick:** If using longer socks, fold the extra fabric over the brace to keep it in place.

3. **Finding socks.** Search for the keywords “seamless knee high,” “boot socks” or “AFO socks.” Brand examples:
  - [Smart Knit](#)
  - [Knit-Rite Direct](#)
  - [Surestep shop](#) or [Surestep products](#)
  - [LAIROS](#)
  - [EJ Kicks](#)

## Shoe Brands

Single and split-size purchasing instructions, for the brands that offer them, are in [their own section below](#).

### Adults and Kids

#### Billy's

- Free zipper reinforcement (contact customer service for ordering instructions if the zipper tends to wear out quickly).
- **Background:** Founded by Billy Price, who created this adaptive brand after a paralyzing injury.
- **Features:** The patented wraparound “FlipTop” zipper allows the entire top of the shoe to flip completely open. Some BILLY styles are especially AFO-friendly, including the D|R line, which offers extra depth and extended width options. Most families will not need to use the extra-wide option, as it is extremely wide. BILLY also offers more supportive sneaker-like models, such as the BILLY Goat styles that are orthotist-designed.

#### New Balance: Wide Styles

- Not an “adaptive brand” but found to work well for braces.
- New Balance 990 series tends to fit orthotics quite well.

#### Merrell: Wide Styles

- Not an “adaptive brand” but found to work well for braces.

#### Friendly Shoes

- **Background:** Adaptive brand that was founded by an occupational therapist, Joseph DiFrancesco.
- **Goal:** Supportive shoes with zippers for easy on and off.

#### Nike: FlyEase and Easy On & Off

- **Background:** This adaptive brand was inspired in part by Matthew Walzer, a teenager with cerebral palsy who wrote to Nike asking for shoes he could put on independently.
- **Goal:** Shoes designed to be easier to put on and take off.
- **Pro-tip:** Most Jordans are not wide enough.

#### Apis Footwear

- [Size quiz](#)
- **Background:** Orthopedic and diabetic footwear company with experience in the orthotics, prosthetics, and pedorthics industry.

#### Skechers: Wide Styles

- Not an “adaptive brand” but found to work well for braces.

#### ASICS: Extended Widths

- Not an “adaptive brand” but found to work well for braces.

### Multi-Brand Websites

For easy searching across multiple brands:

- [Zappos Adaptive](#)
- [Healthy Feet Store](#)
- [Orthotic Shop](#)
- [FlowFeet](#)
- [The Wide Shoes \(width quiz\)](#)
- [Nordstrom Adaptive](#)

## Kids Only

### Ikiki

- Strap extenders available and sold separately.
- [Printable size guide](#)
- **Background:** It began as a squeaky toddler shoe company after the former CEO saw squeaky shoes during a trip to China. The compatibility with braces was discovered secondarily. The squeakers can also serve as positive reinforcement for keeping the heel on the ground in toe-walking conditions.
- **Features:** Extra width, wide opening, Velcro strap, heel squeaker with on/off button.

### See Kai Run

- Longer straps/tabs available and sold separately.
- [Printable size guide](#)
- **Background:** Seattle mom wanted to promote healthy foot development and independent dressing while keeping designs fun. The adaptive collection was created later.
- **Features:** Wide opening, removable insoles, extra-long straps with cuttable intervals.

### PLAE

- Printable size guide at the link above.
- **Background:** Created by footwear designer Ryan Ringholz to design shoes that met children's anatomical needs (flexibility and durability). They discovered compatibility with braces secondarily and created a specific adaptive line.
- **Features:** Wide opening, removable insoles, interchangeable straps, toe guard.

### Stride Rite

- [Printable size guide and size quiz](#)
- **Background:** Stride Rite is a long-standing children's shoe company that created an adaptive line made for braces.
- **Features:** Wide widths, layered removable inserts, stable soles, adjustable closures.

### Surestep

- [Printable size guide](#)
- **Background:** Surestep is a pediatric orthotics company that also creates shoes.
- **Features:** Extra width, extra depth, wide opening, wide toe box, removable insoles, special heel-entry model, special tread to promote intrinsic movement, cut lines on the sole for easy modification by an orthotist.

### Princepard

- **Background:** Founded in 1993 in China, Princepard is an orthopedic footwear brand, designed and researched in collaboration with Italian specialists, to correct or prevent common lower-limb issues.
- **Features:** Built-in 3D-printed orthotic insoles, high/stiffened ankle support, adjustable Velcro, and anti-slip soles.

### Tsukihoshi

- **Background:** Originally founded by Japanese shoemakers in 1873, designed to mimic barefoot movement. Compatibility with braces was discovered later.
- **Features:** Wide toe box, wide opening, removable insoles, single Velcro strap and elastic faux-laces for easy on/off, long heel counters, lightweight, machine washable.

### Ten Little

- [Size quiz](#)
- Replacement insoles sold separately.
- **Background:** Founded by two moms frustrated by how hard it was to find shoes that fit a toddler properly. They discovered compatibility with braces secondarily.
- **Features:** Wide toe box, wide opening, removable insoles, reinforced toe caps, Velcro straps.

### KEEN Boundless

- **Background:** The Boundless collection was created with the help of a Zappos Adaptive focus group of nine kids aged 6–13 and their families in the summer of 2022.
- **Features:** Easy on/off and wide.

### Memo Shoes

- **Background:** Founded by Dr. Anna Łukaszewska, a pediatric rehabilitation physician in Poland, to make corrective orthopedic shoes.

### **Boots for Kids**

- [Butler Boots: The Macaroni Orthotic](#)
- [Stonz Puffer Toddler Bootie](#)
- [Kamik Boots:](#) the Snowbug model was mentioned in some guides.

## Adults Only

- [Cadense](#)
- [Orthofeet](#)
- [Anodyne](#)
- [Drew Shoes](#)
- [Dr. Comfort](#)
- [Apex](#)
- [Fitville](#)

## Boots for Adults

- **Propet:** very wide shoes, up to size 5E in width.

## Custom Modification Brands

- [Zipped Brands / WearZipped](#)
- [Apis Footwear](#)

## Single Shoes and Split Sizes

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### Adults and Kids

#### Billy's

- **Where:** Website only.
- **Instructions:**
  1. **Important:** First, reach out to customer service at [info@billyfootwear.com](mailto:info@billyfootwear.com) to get approval to use the discount code.
  2. Once you get approval, add both sizes of the shoes you need to the cart.
  3. In the "add order notes" section of "My Cart," write: left shoe = \_\_, right shoe = \_\_.
  4. In checkout, use "SINGLESHOE" for the discount code. If it is successful, you should see the price drop.
- Free zipper reinforcement (needs to be stated as "KG zipper mod" in the "add order notes" section of "My Cart").

#### New Balance

- Only with the "Fresh Foam 1540 v4" model sneaker.
- Go to the description and click left foot only or right foot only.

#### Friendly Shoes

- **Where:** Website only.
- **Contact:** Reach out to customer service at [619 488-0066](tel:619488-0066), [info@friendlyshoes.com](mailto:info@friendlyshoes.com) or the [contact page](#).

#### Brooks Mixed Pair Program

- **Where:** In person only, through retail partners. The Brooks website cannot process split-size orders directly.
- **Requirement:** At least 1.5 sizes different or 1 width different.

## Healthy Feet Store

- **Where:** Website only.
- **Requirement:** More than 1.5 sizes in length difference.
- **Contact:** Customer support at [1-866-324-3338](tel:1-866-324-3338).

## FlowFeet

- **Where:** Website only.

## Nordstrom

- **Where:** Website or in person.
- **Requirement:** At least 1.5 sizes different, or at least 1 size and 1 width different, or at least 2 widths different.
- **Contact:** Customer support at [1-888-282-6060](tel:1-888-282-6060).

## Kids Only

### Ikiki

- **Where:** Website only. The website has listings of one-shoe items.

### See Kai Run

- **Where:** Website only.
- **Contact:** Customer support at [customercare@seekairun.com](mailto:customercare@seekairun.com) or [1-888-KAI-SHOE](tel:1-888-KAI-SHOE).

### Piedro Shoes

- **Where:** Based in the UK, but can be found on FlowFeet.

## Adults Only

### Pedors

- **Where:** Website only.
- Fill out the form to receive instructions.

## Single Shoe Exchange Programs

- [CHASA Shoe Exchange](#)
- [OddShoeFinder](#)