

Should You Reconsider Dog Shoes for Your Pet's Comfort?

Are dog shoes a necessity or just a flashy accessory? How do you know if they're the right fit for your pet? Here are some factors to remember when buying shoes for your furry buddy.

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Dog shoes can be beneficial in extreme weather conditions, protecting their paws from hot pavements, cold surfaces, and providing warmth during winter months
- Shoes offer protection for dogs with injuries, support elderly pets with mobility issues, and can prevent paw damage during activities like hiking or walking on rough terrain
- Not all dogs need shoes; comfort is crucial. Some pets find shoes uncomfortable, and should not be forced to wear footwear if they strongly resist
- When selecting dog shoes, prioritize proper fit, comfort, durability and functionality. Measure paw size, choose adjustable, nonslip shoes and ensure they don't cause chafing or discomfort
- Regular shoe maintenance is important. wash shoes frequently to prevent moisture buildup, bacterial growth, and potential skin infections, and consider having multiple pairs for rotation

You've probably seen some dogs walking around with an adorable set of booties, and are probably wondering, "Does my dog need shoes, too?" The fact is, dog shoes are more than just a fashion statement; they can be useful as well. However, in some instances, dog shoes are unnecessary, uncomfortable or even harmful. Here's how to determine if shoes are a good fit for your pooch (or not).

Dog Shoes May Be Helpful in These Situations

Many pet parents question whether dogs need to slip into shoes, when in fact their ancestors, including wild wolves and other canids, have survived thousands of years without any protection. It's true that canines have well-adapted to the challenges of their habitats, however, there are instances when footwear can be advantageous or even protective, such as:^{1,2,3}

- **Extremely hot weather** — Imagine being barefoot and walking down a hot pavement during the peak of summer — if it's painful for you, then it's painful for your pet, too. Slipping on a set of well-fitting booties can provide ample protection for your pet, although, of course, it might be better to stay indoors during the hottest time of the day, and just go outside when the heat of the sun isn't too intense.
- **Provides extra warmth during cold seasons** — Wearing dog shoes during colder months helps keep your furry friend safe from frostbite, especially when they go out and play in the snow. If they get chilly easily, slipping on dog shoes (and socks, too) will help keep them warm.

- **Protection from injuries** — If your dog has an injury on their paw, shoes can help protect the wound, keeping it dry and clean. Shoes also provide extra protection when you're planning to do extreme activities, such as going for a hike — they protect your pup's paws from sharp objects, like thorns or rocks, and prevent small pebbles and wood chips from getting in between their paw pads.
- **Gives support for elderly pets** — Senior dogs usually struggle with mobility issues, even when indoors. They can slip on hardwood floors or shiny tile surfaces, which can be dangerous. Shoes provide extra traction and will help keep them from slipping, providing extra stability and comfort as they move around.

In Some Cases, Dog Shoes Are Unnecessary

Dog shoes are becoming trendy, but as with other accessories, you must remember that your pet's comfort should be your top priority. For example, if the weather is relatively mild, and you're simply going for a walk in the park, there may be no need to slip on booties when going outside.

Many dogs also find it difficult to adapt to wearing shoes and would try to remove them. If you've tried all tactics but your dog simply refuses to wear them, then don't force it. Just make sure to take precautions to protect their paws.

Finally, some dog shoes are designed to look cute but are not comfortable at all. Sure, they may look adorable on the outside, but once worn, your pet can be suffering with every step. If the shoes are ill-fitting, it's best not to use them at all.

Rather, look for shoes that are the right size, provide support and protection, and are suitable for whatever activity your pet is doing. For example, if wearing them during the winter, you may want to look for dog booties that are waterproof.

Tips When Choosing the Right Dog Shoes for Your Pet

Remember that ill-fitting shoes can do more harm than good and could affect your pet's mobility and lead to injury. Hence, you must make sure to find shoes that are 100% comfortable and fit snugly and comfortably. So how can you find the best shoes for your furry buddy? Keep these tips in mind:^{4,5}

- **Measure your dog's paws to make sure you're buying the right size** — Keep in mind that if you're buying for puppies, they can outgrow the shoes, and you may need to buy a new set after a few months.
- **Check that the shoes are made from comfortable, durable and lightweight materials** — High-quality dog shoes may cost a bit more, but they will last longer.
- **Look for shoes that are adjustable so you can fit them securely on your dog's paws** — Otherwise, they may slip off while your dog is walking or running.
- **Find shoes with nonslip soles** — These are especially recommended for elderly dogs, to keep them from falling on slippery surfaces.
- **Check for chafing** — If your dog experiences rubbing or irritation, have them wear socks for added protection.
- **Wash the shoes regularly** — Moisture can become trapped inside the shoes, while the outside can get dirty and muddy. Trapped moisture can cause bacteria to form, which can lead to yeast infections and bacterial

dermatitis. Wash and dry the shoes regularly to prevent this from occurring. If possible, stock up on a few sets so you can cycle them.

The bottom line is that dog shoes are a great accessory to have, even though they may not need to be worn at all times. As long as you find high-quality, well-fitting shoes, they can be a practical option to protect your dog's paws.

Sources and References

^{1,4} [AKC Pet Insurance, December 23, 2021](#)

² [Dogster, September 2, 2024](#)

^{3,5} [Madpaws, August 7, 2021](#)
