

REAL SIMPLE

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Flats

Not all flats are comfortable. Look for pairs that incorporate the buying suggestions in the sidebar below. Here, four pairs to get you started.



Tricks to assist you in finding a comfortable flat.

■ **Look for sturdy construction.**

"Try to push in the area around the heel," says Meghan Cleary, author of *The Perfect Fit: What Your Shoes Say About You* (Chronicle Books, \$13). "If the heel collapses enough to touch the insole, the shoe is not supportive."

■ **Hold each end of a shoe and try to twist it.** If the shoe bends too much, it won't be supportive.

■ **Look for flats with a little bit of a heel if you have high arches.** Heels provide relief from foot pain.

■ **Buy shoes with leather or rubber soles** for optimum shock absorption.

■ **Wear only shoes that have leather or suede insoles.** Breathable and pliable, they help prevent chafing and blistering, and they mold to the feet.

■ **Search for round-toe flats.** They follow the shape of the foot and allow the toes to move.

■ **Avoid slippage and cuts on your heel** by finding a shoe with a back that fits snugly and holds your foot securely.