

With all the new Pickleball players, one question that keeps coming up is “What are ‘non-marking Court shoes’ and why are they required on The Villages courts?”

First, we want to prevent court damage. Court shoes – known as Tennis shoes in most stores - are “non-marking” and do not damage the court surface. Marks indicate the wrong shoes are being worn.

Second, for your protection. Tennis shoes have a smooth sole, facilitating lateral (side to side) movement, critical in court sports. Running shoes and cross trainers have ridges and are designed to go forward, but we move in every direction. Those ridges stick to the court surface when moving backward or sideways. Court shoes have a blunter toe and more support in the ankle area, providing greater stability, helping prevent trips. No slip-on shoes are allowed on the court. Shoes with rounded soles (like Sketchers) should NEVER be worn!

If you play 2 or 3 times per week, your shoes should be replaced approximately every 6 to 12 months. Not only do they lose tread, but they also lose cushioning. There are a few important things to understand about Court Shoes:

- Court shoes are made to give you the support, the cushioning and traction needed on a pickleball/tennis court.
- Court sports require quick starts and stops as well running around. In addition, Pickleball requires a lot of lateral movement, and these are made to provide you with the support and cushioning that you need in these situations. They have rounded edges to minimize flipping over that can turn one’s ankles.
- Walking or running shoes are designed to **prevent** lateral motion, which is fundamental to pickleball. This is one of the top two reasons people fall and/or are injured (the other is running backwards – to paraphrase Nike – “Just don’t do it!”).
- Non-court shoes may leave marks on the court, if they do you cannot use them on our courts.
- Additionally, any shoe marks may be very slippery, leading to potentially serious injury to others.
- Slip-on shoes should never be used on courts.

We were asked to show some examples:



Court shoes – smoother bottom with no raised “ridges” that stick to the court, facilitating lateral movement. They also have more support in the ankle area.



Running shoes have raised ridges and grooves, designed for forward motion. They “stick” to the ground, preventing lateral motion.

Do **NOT** wear these!



Walking shoes are designed for stability in a forward motion, preventing any lateral motion.

Do **NOT** wear these!



“**Sketcher**” type thick or rolling soles and **slip-on shoes** are extremely dangerous. Not only are the soles improper for a court surface, but they provide no lateral support.

Never wear these!