

Why You Need to Rehearse in Your Character's Shoes

Tip Sheet

"You can't understand someone until you've walked a mile in their shoes."

Your shoes affect your physical movements.

- Your body moves differently while wearing different footwear.
- Are you able to move equally well wearing dance shoes, steel-toed combat boots, Converse sneakers, five-inch high heels, strappy sandals, slippers...?
- As an actor, you need to be confident in your movements while performing, no matter what your role calls for. Start wearing your shoes in rehearsal as soon as possible.
- If your character doesn't wear shoes, you will also need to rehearse in this manner, to get used to being barefoot, having dirty feet, avoiding getting stepped on, etc.
- Look through the script and make notes about what your character might wear, and try out different shoes during rehearsal.
- Make notes of what you as an actor have to do during the show, such as climb stairs, dance, fight, run, or tumble. What shoes would be best for your needs as a performer? This information can help the costume team determine what shoes would work best for you.
- Once you receive your shoes, try out all your movements right away so you can communicate with the director and costume team if there are any concerns.

Your shoes are part of your costume, which helps to define your character.

- How does your character feel about their shoes? Why did they choose those shoes? For style, for comfort, for practicality? Did they even have a choice of what shoes to wear? Do their shoes fit them properly? Are the shoes well-maintained or shabby?
- Does your character change shoes throughout the show? Why? How does the change in shoes affect both you as the actor, and your character? How can you accurately show this evolution of movement?

