

# Sole factor is not

## ATHLETE'S FOOT

Brand: Ascent

**\$99.95**

- » Rubber sole
- » Leather upper
- » Lined with cushioned mesh
- » Heel support

### Podiatrist

**Christopher Camplin**

“You can see it is the best quality but you are paying for it



## TARGET

Brand: Own

**\$29**

- » Podiatrist approved
- » Leather upper
- » Leather sock
- » Arch support on standard fit

“These have a leather liner which is good. It is a good shoe that is everything you need



## BIG W

Brand: Own

**\$14.98**

- » Leather upper
- » Padded collar
- » Soft mesh lining
- » Slip resistant

“These are not as good as the Target ones when it comes to the heel and definitely nowhere near as rigid



## PAYLESS

Brand: Grosby

**\$39.95**

- » Leather upper
- » Removable insole
- » Moulded heel cup

“You can almost fold the shoe which is bad. A lot of shoe manufacturers put a plastic or metal plank through so you can't bend the shoe and this doesn't have that



## BRIANA DOMJEN

THEY have to look smart, be comfortable and double as a sport shoe, taking all the punishment a kid can dish out.

But that doesn't mean your child's school shoe has to cost a packet.

With only a week before the first school bell sounds for the year, the *Sunday Mail* road-tested five pairs of shoes of varying prices to show which were value for money.

Although they may look similar, costs can vary drastically, with Kmart spruiking its leather-upper shoes for \$6, while The Athlete's Foot stocks brands at 15 times the cost.

Centre for Podiatric Medicine podiatrist Christopher Camplin said the big discount department stores like Target and Big W were bringing competition to the market.

“You don't always have to purchase the most expensive shoe to get good quality,” Mr Camplin said. “The other brands are putting up some good competition.”

He said the Ascent shoe from The Athlete's Foot was the best quality. It comes with a hefty \$99.95 price tag.

“This is a very sturdy shoe, it has a good grippy out sole, it is leather upper and you can see right away it is high quality.”

Mr Camplin said the \$29 Target shoe was the most competitive.

“The Target shoe is pretty good and if they spent an extra \$10 or \$15 they could get a very good shoe,” he said. “They are

## KMART

Brand: Own

**\$6**

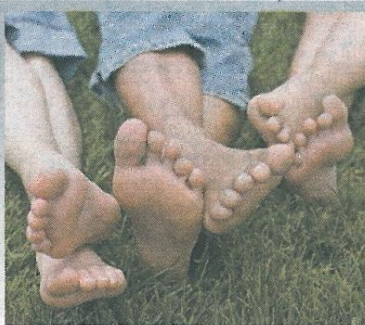
- » Leather-coated synthetic upper
- » Synthetic sole
- » Fixed insole

“There is almost no support in the arch or heel sections. The shoe also bends too easily when twisted sideways and can almost be folded in half



## TOP TIPS

- » Fit is the most important thing – get the correct width and length.
- » Fit the shoe to the larger foot: Most people have different-sized feet.
- » Go for a shoe which has good flexibility at the front.
- » The shoe should have a leather upper and liner and a rubber sole.
- » A lower sole height is important.
- » Don't buy a shoe that is too big.



# always about the price



**Nice fit:** Emily Watson tries on her shoes – with help from sister Molly.  
**Picture:** Calum Robertson

## Good shoes go the distance

THE start of a new school year can be an expensive time for parents, but Ceinwen Walton believes opting for good quality school shoes can save you money in the long run.

The Millswood mother of four said she had just spent \$90-\$110 on each pair of school shoes for her daughters – Chloe, 13, Molly, 11, Emily, 8, and Isabella, 4 – who all have special needs when it comes to finding the perfect fit.

“The girls all have very narrow feet so we have to go to a proper store,” she said.

“Even Betts couldn't fit them the other day. We generally find that it is quite hard to find their size and then we try to weigh up cost versus how long they're going to last.

“We like them to fit really well and hopefully last the year.

“We generally use Ollie Ashenden. They have

a huge range that fits really well. This year we actually tried Athlete's Foot and they seemed to be good.”

While Mrs Walton is happy to pay for a good fit, she said plenty of her friends decide on cheaper brands, despite the fact that they might not last the year.

“Nearly everyone else I know would go and buy Big W or Kmart school shoes,” she said. “They tend to say they might have to buy another pair halfway through the year.

“But it also depends how tough kids are on the shoes. Boys, if they're climbing trees and running around and kicking footballs, they might tend to go through shoes quicker than girls who are just going to prance around the schoolyard.”

– Roxanne Allan

a good, firm shoe and have good fore-foot flexibility. They have a leather liner, which is good, and you can see the leather is a very good quality.”

Spiro Vithoulkas, director of Adelaide-based Podiatry Care, said children's feet continually develop until the age of 17. He said ill-fitting shoes could damage children's feet and also joints further up the body.

Mr Vithoulkas said it was crucial that shoes fit properly to provide proper

support and avoid malleable bones being deformed. “Wearing the wrong shoes can affect our balance, how we walk and what pressure we put on various joints,” he said. “The most important factor for children's shoes is that they are the right size.

“Between the ages of five and 12, a child's foot grows about one full shoe size every six months, but slows considerably after this time.

“Children's shoes should be checked

every three months to ensure they still fit. A correctly fitting shoe should have a thumb space clearance at the end of the longest toe, and should not compress the sides of the front of the foot.

“Parents neglecting to check shoe fit or trying to squeeze a few extra months out of a pair of shoes to get better value for money can end up causing more problems in the long term.”

He said the Kmart shoes price was reflective of their quality. “It has a nice

thick sole which would provide good cushioning but the actual shoe is lacking support in almost every area,” he said.

University of Sydney Faculty of Health Sciences PhD candidate Caleb Wegener warned against buying shoes that were too big to save cash.

“A well-designed shoe is designed to flex at the ball of the foot. If a shoe is too big then those flex grooves in the shoe won't line up with where the foot is designed to bend,” Mr Wegener said.

“Getting them too big to save money is not a good idea in the long run.”

Mr Wegener said paying a little extra to get your child fitted by a professional could be beneficial.

“It does help in that they tend to take the time to make sure they fit the shoe properly,” he said.

Mr Wegener said vinyl shoes increased the risk of fungal infections such as tinea and could make the feet smell.

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