
SHOEMAKERS
ACADEMY

Complete Shoe Inspection Checklist

Check the packaging

1. Is the shoe in the correct inner box for its model?
2. Is the box presentable? Make sure the box is not damaged or dirty.
3. Is the box the correct size? The shoes should not be crushed or loose inside.
4. Does the information on the box end label match with the shoe's color, model, and size?
5. Check any hangtags to ensure they are correct for the shoe.
6. Do you have a left and right shoe?
7. Are the shoes the same size and color?
8. Check the tongue label information to ensure it matches with the shoes.

Check the uppers for symmetry

1. Does the pair match in length? If the size marks agree, confirm the shoes are the same length.
2. Roll the uppers together side by side, checking the alignment of the shoe parts.
3. Do the toe caps, vamps, overlays, eye stays, eyelets all match up?
4. How are the tongues attached? Are they straight? Are they attached at the same height?
5. Hold the shoes up and look at the heels. Make sure the shoe sits on the outsole straight.
6. Check that the upper is not rotated or clocked off-center.
7. Roll the heels together, check that the back height and collar lines match.

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Check the materials for defects

1. With the uppers side by side, compare the finish and colors of each shoe part.
2. Do the colors match? Examine them piece by piece. Check the backing colors.
3. If the leather or mesh parts have a surface emboss, do the patterns run in the same direction?
4. Look over the stitching. You don’t want to see loose or broken stitches.
5. Are the stick lines neat, smooth, and do they follow the edge of the parts closely?
6. Do the stitching patterns match? Single stitch lines, double stitch lines, and triple stitch lines.
7. Be on the lookout for melted stitch ends.
8. Do the thread colors match?
9. Check for hairy suede or other material issues or mismatched backing colors.
10. Are the cut edges clean?
11. Look at any rolled edges and check that they are smooth and even.
12. Check that binding edges are smooth with even edge exposure.
13. Do you see any pressing marks on the vamp?
14. Are there dirty or smeared logos? Check embroidery logos for dirt or snagged stitches.
15. Did you review the seams? If you see the stitches, this issue is called “grinning.”
16. Look for X-ray issues where overlays or seams are showing from underneath.
17. Check metal hardware for scratches or chips. Make sure rivet backs are smooth, not cracked.
18. Are the aglets smooth, straight, and stiff? They should not be bent or cracked.
19. Are the shoelaces the same length, color-matched, and free of snags or glue?

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Check the outsoles

1. Do the shoe bottoms match? Are the color blocks in the same location?
2. Look over the midsole sidewall for wrinkles.
3. Examine the seam joining the upper to the outsole.
4. Look for any extra glue on the upper; 2mm is the limit for over gluing.
5. Look for over buffing of the upper.
6. On the shoe bottom, check for color bleeding between color blocks.
7. Look for any paint which may be covering mistakes.
8. Check to make sure the outsole parts fit together neatly without any extra glue.
9. Check for outsole parts that may be splitting, cupped, bowed, or crooked.
10. Is there any rubber blooming? Look for chalky white film on the rubber parts.
11. Do the shoes sit flat?
12. Does the toe spring match on the left and right foot?

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Check inside the shoes

1. Look inside the shoe opening. Is the lining clean and free of wrinkles?
2. Confirm the footbed is straight, flat, and fits correctly, no wrinkles or curls.
3. Is the collar lining clean and wrinkle-free?
4. Run your hand around the collar, feel for any lumps, bumps, or glue.
5. Feel around the edges of the footbed for wrinkles or channel stitching defects.
6. Check the edges of the tongue for rough stitching or creases in the edges.
7. Make sure to feel where the tongue is attached to the bottom of the shoe's throat.
   This area can have rough stitching or a hard lump.
8. Make sure to reach all the way down into the vamp and toe tip.
   You are feeling for wrinkles in the front edge of the footbed and any rough stitching.

Check the fit and function

1. Are the uppers too stiff or too flexible for the function of the shoe?
2. Is the sole too stiff or too soft per the function of the shoe?
3. Does the shoe fit to size?
4. Does the shoe crease when the shoe is flexed?
5. Does the vamp dive when walking / standing.
6. Does the heel dig in while walking / standing.

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