

Sole searching

Get involved in this citizen-science project from Dundee University to study the marks footwear leaves behind. The data you collect could help forensic scientists investigate crime scenes.

What you need

- A camera (the one on a phone will do)
- Clean shoes
- Small paintbrush
- Cooking oil
- 18 pieces of A4 paper
- Hot-chocolate powder
- Sticky tape
- Sole searching ruler (print out from tinyurl.com/SN-ruler)
- Paper towels for wiping your shoes

How does movement affect shoe prints?



What's this all about?

Scientists at Dundee University want to learn more about how prints are left behind by shoes and how footwear marks are affected when people move in different ways. The team are asking for your assistance to help them build a database of different shoe prints, which they need in a standard format, so that they can compare the prints precisely.

FIND OUT MORE!

To find out more about the Sole Searching project, go to tinyurl.com/SN-soleprints



1 Take photos of the sole of your shoe, each side and the top. Then, lightly paint the bottom of your shoe sole with the oil – don't use too much.



2 Put on your shoe. Place a single sheet of A4 paper on hard, flat, smooth ground and make a single footprint in the centre.



3 Check the print. If you can't see the mark clearly then brush some hot-chocolate powder onto the print, which will help it show up.



4 Make different footprints by running, jumping and walking on different sheets of paper. You can tape the paper down to stop it from moving.



5 Using the same amount of oil each time, make prints for each activity six times. Mark the sheets of paper so you know which print is which.



6 Put the L-shaped ruler next to each sheet of paper and take a photo of each from above. Upload your photos to tinyurl.com/SN-footprints

TOP TIP!

Give the bottom of your shoes a wipe when you have finished so you don't slip.