

# 41 - Sneakers

Where did sneakers come from? How'd they get so popular? And how did they get the name... "sneakers"?

Sneakers, as we know them, didn't appear until the last century. That's because sneakers wouldn't exist without a major invention of the mid 1800's. What do you think it is?

Is it

- A) Vulcanized rubber
- B) Basketball
- C) The waffle iron

If you guessed A, vulcanized rubber - you're right. But... if you guessed B or C, you deserve some credit too... because sneakers are what they are today thanks in large part to basketball and waffles too!

In 1839, Charles Goodyear invented a type of rubber called "vulcanized rubber" that could be molded into flexible things that would not lose their shape in the heat... things like tires, shoe soles, and basketballs.

So what does a waffle iron have to do with the invention of sneakers? The answer to that and a WHOLE LOT more science and history on today's very fun episode.

## Activities

### Make waffles!

You can either grab some frozen waffles and heat 'em up, or make them from scratch from the below recipe.

Make sure an adult does all of the hot parts and handles any sharp objects. If there are multiple children, take turns adding the ingredients.

Before you eat your treats, look at the cooked waffle, is it smooth or bumpy? Think about how a smooth surface against water is very slippery - but how a surface shaped like a waffle would force water out the empty parts and allow the waffle bumps to contact the ground.

### Recipe

- 2 eggs
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups milk

½ cup vegetable oil  
1 tablespoon white sugar  
4 teaspoons baking powder  
¼ teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon vanilla extract

### **Step 1**

Preheat waffle iron. Beat eggs in large bowl with hand beater until fluffy. Beat in flour, milk, vegetable oil, sugar, baking powder, salt and vanilla, just until smooth.

### **Step 2**

Spray preheated waffle iron with non-stick cooking spray. Pour mix onto hot waffle iron. Cook until golden brown. Serve hot.

## **Additional Resources**

1. **Video: Sneaker factory!** Are you curious how shoes are made in a factory? Check out this [video](#). What part looks most tricky?
2. **Play some b-ball games!** Do you want to play some basketball with your sneakers? You don't need a whole team to try these [activities](#).
3. **Break for Mom or Dad** - Are your adults ready for you to do some quiet play inside after playing basketball and making waffles? Here are some fun [ideas](#) to keep you busy!

## **Kid News**

What are your favorite snacks? Where do you get them? Do you get them at home or do you stop at a fast food restaurant? Did you know that ancient people had fast food restaurants too?

People from Pompeii, an ancient city that was destroyed by a volcano, had fast food stalls where they could choose their favorite foods. Scientists who research ancient buildings and cities - called "archeologists" - discovered these fast food stalls and are learning about them. Read more about them [here](#) and learn how ancient people could tell what the different stalls sold.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This activity guide is for the Who Smarted? podcast [www.WhoSmarted.com](http://www.WhoSmarted.com)