

Make Footwear Impressions - CSI Style!

If you have an interest in forensic science or simply like the idea of detective work, then this activity is for you. This is a simple but accurate method of taking a footwear impression from a shoe just like the detectives do when they're investigating. So line up some "suspects," i.e. old shoes, and let's see what kind of impression they make!

What You Need:

- An old shoe
- Cooking spray
- Cocoa or hot chocolate powder
- Piece of white paper
- Small paintbrush
- Magnifying glass (optional)

What You Do:

1. Find an old shoe to practice on.
2. Lightly spray the bottom, also called the tread, of the shoe with cooking spray.
3. Press the shoe with the tread down on the white paper, then lift it away.
4. Using the paintbrush, apply a small amount of cocoa powder to the wet area using a dabbing motion
5. Blow away any excess powder and label your exhibit.
6. Look at your footwear impression closely with a magnifying glass and see if you can find any accidental features like cuts in the tread or unique marks. This is how criminals are caught!

Try this activity with other kinds of shoes and note the differences!

