

BUY. IMPROVE. FLIP.

HOW TO MAKE MONEY FLIPPING SNEAKERS

A Guide to Sourcing, Authentication,
Pricing, and Profitable Reselling



JACK FLIPWELL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRO	1
Chapter 1 - Choose Your Segment Before You Start Buying	9
Chapter 2 - Does This Model Actually Sell?	14
Chapter 3 - Calculate Your Maximum Buy Price Before You Spend	19
Chapter 4 - Where the Best Deals Actually Come From	25
Chapter 5 - Authentication: Stop Looking for One Magic Test	32
Chapter 6 - Condition, Cleaning, and Preparation Without Hiding Flaws	38
Chapter 7 - Photos, Description, and Pricing: Build a Listing That Sells Without Tricks	45
Chapter 8 - Choose the Right Selling Channel and Complete the Transaction Safely	51
Chapter 9 - Scams, Disputes, and Returns: Prepare for Problems Before They Happen	58
Chapter 10 - Capital Rotation: Paper Profit Is Not Enough ..	65
Chapter 11 - Metrics That Show Whether You Are Actually Making Money	72
Chapter 12 - Scale Without Losing Control.....	78
Chapter 13 - When to Hold, When to Mark Down, and When to Exit.....	86
Chapter 14 - Red Flags: When the Best Decision Is Not to Buy	92

Chapter 15 - Releases and Restocks: Do Not Confuse Hype With Opportunity.....	99
Chapter 16 - Second-Hand and Local Deals: Higher Margins Require More Discipline.....	106
Chapter 17 - Taxes, Law, and Formalities: Your Margin Is Not Really Yours Until the Business Is Properly Handled.....	113
Chapter 18 - Build Your Own Sneaker-Flipping Operating System.....	120
Chapter 19 - Risk Control: Protect Your Capital Before You Chase Bigger Profit.....	128
Chapter 20 - Your First 30 Days: From Market Observation to a Repeatable Process.....	135

INTRO

Flipping sneakers looks simple from the outside: buy lower, sell higher, keep the difference. In reality, the space between purchase and profit is filled with decisions that separate a genuine deal from an expensive mistake. You need to understand demand, sizes, liquidity, authenticity, condition, platform fees, shipping costs, returns, and how quickly your money is likely to come back. This book does not promise easy money. It gives you a practical framework for making better decisions, controlling risk, and building a process based on evidence rather than excitement.

The sneaker market is attractive precisely because different products behave very differently. One model may sell within hours in a popular size while the same shoe in another size sits for weeks. A highly anticipated release can become a poor flip if supply is larger than expected, while an ordinary outlet pair can produce an excellent return when the buying price is low enough and demand is steady. That is why this book does not begin with logos, hype, or limited-edition status. It begins with market segment, liquidity, real transaction data, and the economics of the deal.

One of the most important rules is that an asking price is not a market price. A seller can list a pair for almost any amount, but actual completed sales tell you what buyers are really willing to pay. Before buying, you should look beyond the cheapest current listing and examine recent sold prices, transaction frequency, size differences, current supply, and the direction of the market. If ten sellers are asking \$400 but comparable pairs keep selling for \$300, then \$400 is not the number on which you should build your profit calculation.

The second rule is to work backward from the likely selling price instead of forward from the purchase price. Beginners often buy a pair for \$200 and only afterward ask how much they need to sell it for. A safer process begins with a realistic exit price, then subtracts marketplace fees, payment costs, shipping, packaging, authentication where relevant, possible returns, taxes when applicable, and a safety margin. Only after those deductions do you know the maximum amount you can afford to pay. A large part of the profit in flipping is created at the moment of purchase.

Authentication deserves special attention because sneakers are a heavily counterfeited category. A fake pair may have a convincing box, a correct SKU, good stitching, and even packaging that looks almost identical to retail. There is no single universal test that can prove authenticity in every case. Labels, SKU information, materials, stitching, construction, shape, outsole details, insoles, accessories, packaging, and provenance should be considered together. For expensive, frequently counterfeited, or uncertain pairs, professional verification through a trusted authentication service or marketplace can be a sensible additional layer of protection.

This book will not teach you how to bypass authentication systems, marketplace protections, purchase limits, platform rules, or the law. It will not show you how to alter receipts, misrepresent product history, manipulate disputes, or hide information from a buyer. Trust is one of the most valuable assets a reseller can build, and one serious authenticity dispute can erase the profit from many successful transactions. Tax, consumer, business, import, return, and recordkeeping rules vary by country and can change. Always check current requirements for the country and platform in

which you operate, and seek professional advice when the scale of your activity makes it appropriate.

Condition is the next major variable. New, tried on, lightly worn, used in very good condition, and heavily worn are not interchangeable descriptions. Buyers may care about outsole wear, creasing, discoloration, heel drag, odor, damaged mesh, cracked leather, missing accessories, replacement laces, insoles, and the condition of the original box. A small defect can have a limited effect on a common everyday shoe but a much larger impact on a collectible release. You need to evaluate condition the way the market will evaluate it, not the way you hope it will be seen.

Safe cleaning and preparation can add value, especially in second-hand flipping, but preparation should never become concealment. Dust removal, careful cleaning, organizing the set, replacing ordinary packaging materials, and presenting the product well can improve the buyer experience. Painting over damage without disclosure, hiding repairs, manipulating photos, or describing a restored pair as untouched creates unnecessary dispute and reputation risk. The objective is to present the best honest version of the product you actually own. A buyer should receive the same pair, in the same meaningful condition, that the listing led them to expect.

Deals can come from many places: new releases, restocks, outlets, seasonal sales, second-hand stores, local listings, specialist marketplaces, general marketplaces, and other collectors. Each source has a different risk profile. Buying from an authorized retailer usually provides stronger provenance but may leave less room for margin. A local private listing can create a much larger discount but may require much more work on authenticity, condition, seller verification, and payment safety. The bigger the apparent

discount, the more important it becomes to understand why the seller is accepting less than the market normally pays.

Selling is more than taking three photos and choosing a number. A strong listing should make the product easy to evaluate without hiding wear or distorting color. It should identify the exact model, size, SKU, condition, completeness, important flaws, and any relevant cleaning, repair, or restoration. The right selling channel also depends on the product. A marketplace with higher fees may still be worthwhile if it offers stronger buyer demand, better payment protection, authentication, or a smoother transaction process.

Transaction security matters at every stage. Be cautious with suspicious links, fake payment confirmations, pressure to ship immediately, unusual instructions, and requests to move outside a marketplace's normal protection process. A screenshot saying that money was sent is not the same as verified payment. For valuable pairs, keep records of the product before shipment, including labels, box condition, notable marks, accessories, and packaging. Documentation does not guarantee that every dispute will be resolved in your favor, but it gives you evidence instead of relying on memory.

Returns and disputes also need to be treated as normal business risks rather than impossible exceptions. A buyer may return a product for legitimate reasons, a parcel may be damaged, or the parties may disagree about condition. In worse cases, a returned product may not match the one originally shipped. Your process should therefore include careful documentation, secure packing, tracking, and a clear understanding of the marketplace's dispute procedures. Consumer rights and return obligations vary depending on jurisdiction and whether you are acting as a private seller or a business, so check current rules rather than relying on

phrases such as "no returns" as if they override applicable law.

For many beginners, the real constraint is not finding deals but having too much money trapped in inventory. Ten pairs bought at apparently attractive prices can be worse than three lower-margin pairs that sell quickly and release cash for the next opportunity. You therefore need to measure more than profit per pair. Time to sale, net return on capital, aging inventory, markdowns, return rates, sourcing performance, and cash availability all matter. Flipping becomes a business when you stop judging success by one impressive sale and start judging the performance of the whole system.

Scaling does not simply mean buying more sneakers. Before increasing volume, you should know which segments you understand, which sizes move reliably, where your best sourcing comes from, which channels produce the strongest net results, and where most disputes or returns originate. More inventory magnifies good processes, but it also magnifies weak authentication, poor pricing, bad recordkeeping, and slow-moving stock. Systems should improve before capital expands. Otherwise, growth can produce higher revenue while quietly creating lower liquidity and more risk.

This book will take you from selecting a starting segment to building a practical first-30-days plan. You will learn how to study sold prices, evaluate sizes and liquidity, calculate a maximum buy price, assess authenticity and condition, source from different channels, prepare pairs safely, photograph and describe them, choose selling platforms, communicate with buyers, package and ship securely, handle disputes, manage inventory, track performance, and scale carefully. You will also learn when not to buy, when to cut a

price, and when a supposedly exciting opportunity is simply too fragile.

The goal is not to win every release or predict which sneaker will become the next collector grail. The goal is to build a repeatable decision process in which the likely reward is large enough to justify the risk. Find the deal. Add the value. Keep the margin. The more consistently you can do those three things without taking shortcuts on authenticity, safety, legality, or honesty, the more realistic your chances of building a profitable sneaker-reselling operation become.

Chapter 1 - Choose Your Segment Before You Start Buying

The most common beginner mistake in sneaker reselling is starting with products instead of strategy. A discounted pair appears, a familiar logo catches your attention, or a release starts trending and suddenly it feels like an opportunity. But a deal exists only when a specific model, in a specific size and condition, has enough real demand at a price that leaves room for profit after costs. Your first job is therefore not to buy a pair. Your first job is to decide which part of the market you want to understand well enough to recognize value.

The sneaker market is too broad for a beginner to know everything at once. Limited releases behave differently from everyday lifestyle models. Running shoes, basketball shoes, retro releases, designer collaborations, used pairs, and outlet inventory each have different buyers, pricing patterns, authenticity risks, and selling speeds. The wider your focus, the harder it is to notice when a particular price is unusually attractive. Specialization does not reduce your opportunity at the beginning. It increases your ability to recognize a real one.

A useful starting segment sits at the intersection of three things: demand, access to inventory, and your own knowledge. If you regularly visit outlets, discounted mainstream models may be a logical starting point. If you understand older retro releases better than most people around you, used-market sourcing may give you an advantage. If you live in a city with an active local resale scene, direct transactions may offer opportunities that are unavailable in quieter areas. Do not choose a segment only because it looks exciting online. Choose one in which you can

gather better information or obtain better inventory than the average buyer.

The best beginner segment is not necessarily the one with the highest possible profit per pair. A sneaker bought for \$1,000 and sold for \$1,200 may look more attractive than one bought for \$180 and sold for \$260. But if the first pair takes three months to sell and the second moves in a week, the smaller deal may use capital far more efficiently. Beginners should pay particular attention to liquidity because they usually have limited cash and less ability to tolerate long holding periods. A smaller profit can be better if the money comes back quickly and can be reused.

It helps to divide products into high, medium, and low liquidity. High-liquidity sneakers sell regularly and have enough comparable transactions that pricing is relatively easy to estimate. Medium-liquidity products may offer more margin but require patience. Low-liquidity products can include unusual colorways, extreme sizes, old releases, or models with a very narrow collector base. A low-liquidity pair can still be valuable, but it is harder to know when the right buyer will appear.

Size is one of the most important liquidity factors and one of the easiest to underestimate. The same model can behave very differently across sizes. Demand depends on the brand, silhouette, target customer, geography, and whether buyers mainly want the shoe to wear or collect. Do not assume that middle sizes are always best or that the size with the highest asking price offers the biggest opportunity. Study the exact size you intend to buy.

Imagine that size 10 of a model regularly sells for around \$300 while size 13 is listed at \$400. At first glance, size 13 looks more valuable. But if dozens of size 10 pairs have sold