

## Tips for Choosing a Running Shoe

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The abundance of shoe brands and types on the market can make it difficult for the novice and the experienced runner alike to choose the right shoe. The selection of proper shoe wear is important because it may help to reduce the risk of developing a running related overuse injury. This article will offer some basic guidelines to help you make the best purchase for your feet.

### Know Your Feet

With each step, the foot progresses through a complex biomechanical sequence. This sequence affords us the ability to adapt to our running surface and efficiently propel us forward. Risk of injury increases if one's foot biomechanics deviates from the norm. If you have had your feet evaluated by a physician or rehabilitation professional, you may have been told that you are a "pronator" or a "supinator". These terms loosely describe how your feet behave during the stance phase of running.

A pronatory (excessive mobility) or supinatory (excessive stability) foot type may contribute to foot, ankle, or lower extremity injuries. If your feet have an apparent lack of arches when standing,

you may have a pronatory foot type. Another way to determine if you overpronate is by examining your shoes from behind. If your shoe is tilted inward or bulges over the inner part of your shoe, you may overpronate. A majority of athletes with abnormal foot mechanics fall into the pronatory category. Runners with a supinatory foot type may have feet with high arches. Their shoes may show excessive wear laterally.

### Shoe Types

In general, those who have a pronatory foot type should be fit for a stability style shoe. Stability shoes provide support medially and generally have good cushioning. Those who are excessive overpronators should consider a motion control shoe. The motion control shoe is a heavier shoe designed to maximize stability. A cushioned style shoe is designed to allow "supinators" the ability to achieve as much motion as possible.

### Choosing A Shoe

The American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society recommends the following tips for selecting athletic shoes (1):

- When shopping for running shoes do so near the end of the day after

a run. Your feet will be the largest at this time.

- The shoes you select should feel comfortable both walking and running.
- New shoes should not need to be broken in. You will increase your risk for foot discomfort and possibly injury if you try to "break in" a pair.
- Finally, you should be able to wiggle your toes easily in the shoe, while your heel should be gripped firmly to prevent movement of the heel during running.

### Purchasing Running Shoes

Do not forget to purchase new shoes frequently. Even though a shoe may not "appear worn out", a shoe's life is limited to about 300 to 500 running miles. Consider shopping for shoes from a running specialty store. The staff is generally more experienced with helping running athletes select the correct shoe based upon one's foot type and training habits. ▲

### References

1. American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society. (2001). Selecting Athletic Shoes. Retrieved April 9, 2006 from <http://www.aofas.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3393>.

### About the Author

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