

Choosing the Ideal Shoe

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How to choose a running shoe and your choice of running shoes can make the difference between running in comfort or pain and most importantly, whether or not you may become injured.

The most common mistake I see runners make is looking to only purchase a shoe that is on sale. What you need is the right shoe for your foot type. Each shoe is designed for 3 general foot types; Flat Feet, High Arched Feet, Normal Arch Feet. You first need to know your foot and then shop for the shoe that matches your foot type. It is always best to go to a specialty running store. The people who work in these stores are knowledgeable and understand appropriate shoe models for certain foot types. Shoe stores we highly recommend are: The Running Company (Oakville~905.815.1952), Foot Tools (Burlington~905.337.1888), Runner's Den (Waterdown~905.690.4004 or Hamilton~905.523.7866) and Running Room. Most of their employees are also avid runners and understand the challenges of a proper fitting shoe.

What's your foot type?

It's important to know your foot type so you can find a shoe that meets your foot's requirements both on and off the job. An easy way to determine the shape of your feet is to dunk your feet in water and then stand on a surface that'll show an imprint of your feet. A brown paper bag works the best for this. Your footprint should fall into one of three categories:



Flat Feet -This foot looks like the whole sole of the foot is in contact with the ground. The low arch in this foot type is usually associated with excessive pronation, (when standing, your heels lean inward). Excessive wear on the inner side of your shoes or shoes that tilt inward when placed on a flat surface are signs of excessive pronation. Excessive pronation can cause many different types of injury. It is recommended that you purchase shoes with little cushioning (absorption property of shoe) and more motion control or stability properties (these properties help with the stability of the rear foot and with the transfer from heel strike to forefoot).



If you have **flat feet and overpronate**, choose a **Motion-Control** running shoe. Motion control shoes help to prevent your foot from rolling in too far, have a straight shape that gives maximum support to your foot and offer firm support with maximum rear-foot control.



High Arched Feet – This foot print will show that the band connecting the forefoot and the heel is very thin or even non-existent. This type of foot tends to over supinate (when standing, your heels lean outward). Shoes that wear on the entire outside edge, with the side of the shoe becoming overstretched or shoes that tilt outward when placed on a flat surface are signs of excessive supination. This foot type is not very effective as shock absorbers. It is recommended that you purchase a shoe with good cushioning (soft insoles that provide good absorption properties in high force impact areas) and without motion or stability properties.



If you have **high-arched feet and underpronate**, you should choose a **Cushioned** running shoe. Cushioned shoes generally have the softest midsoles and the least medial support. Less medial support encourages foot motion, which is helpful for underpronators (who have rigid, immobile feet).



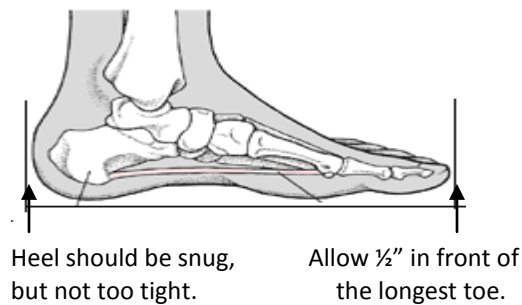
Normal Feet - This foot will have an average sized arch and show the forefoot and heel connected by an even broad band. The motion of a normal foot lands on the outside of the heel and rolls inwards a small amount to absorb the shock. This foot type tends to function efficiently.

If you have **normal arches and pronate normally**, choose a **Cushioning or Stability** running shoe based on your training regimen. Stability shoes offer a good blend of cushioning, medial support and durability. To provide stability, these shoes often have a medial post or two-density midsole.

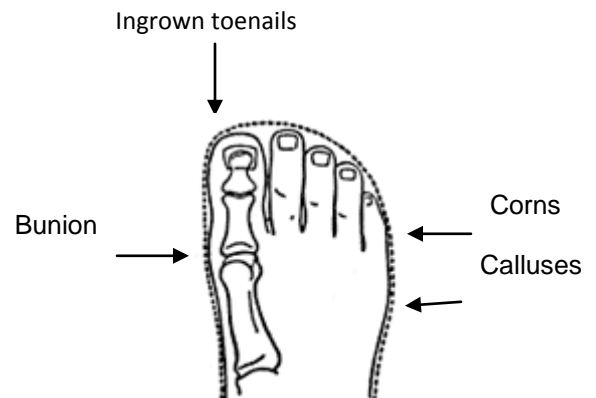
The ideal shoe fit

- Shoe fitting is best done at the end of the day because your feet swell as you stand on them all day
- Insist on having both feet measured in length and width
- If you wear a prescribed insole or orthotic, inform the salesperson and wear it during the fitting
- The heel should fit snugly. The shoe is too loose if you can fit a finger behind the heel. (See diagram A & B below)
- Allow a thumb-width of extra length from your longest toe to allow plenty of room
- One foot is often slightly larger than the other. Always fit to the larger foot.
- Take your time. Spend 5-10 minutes walking around in the store to ensure a good fit. Remember, the shoe should be comfortable in the store. Never buy a pair of shoes thinking that you will eventually break them in.

How Footwear Should Fit



What Can Happen if Footwear is Too Tight



If you experience painful foot problems it is recommended that you see a foot care specialist ~ chiropodist or podiatrist.

J. Richard Werkman is a Registered Chiropodist providing exceptional foot care for all ages. For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact him at 905.845.4817 or info@werkman.ca www.werkman.ca.