



BACK FACTS: Running Shoes

The function of a running shoe is to protect the foot from the stress of running, while permitting the athlete to achieve his/her maximum potential. With so many different types and styles of running shoes today, it can be very confusing to know which one to choose. First, you need to know your feet.



For example, people with low arches, called pronators, will need a shoe that provides some degree of stability. A shoe with good cushioning is important for people with high arches, called supinators.

There are three main features of a shoe that you need to consider when selecting a running shoe: shape, type of construction, and midsole.

Shape. To determine the shape of the shoe, look at the sole. Draw a straight line from the middle of the heel to the top of the shoe. In a curve-shaped shoe, most comfortable for supinators, the line will pass through the outer half of the toe. A straight-shaped shoe will have a line that passes through the middle of the toe. These shoes are built to give pronators added stability.

Construction. There are three types of shoe construction. To evaluate this, take the insole out and look at what type of stitching is used on the bottom. In board construction shoes, built specifically for pronators, the bottom of the shoe will not have any visible stitching. Combination shoes, appropriate for mild pronators or supinators, will have stitching that begins halfway. On slip-constructed shoes, you will see stitching running the entire length of the shoe providing the flexibility supinators need.

Midsole. Most of the cushioning and stability of a running shoe is determined by the midsole. A dual-density midsole provides shock absorption as well as some stability, perfect for pronators. Single density midsoles offer good cushioning but are not great at providing stability, making them better for supinators.

Other Shoe Shopping Tips

- Shop in the afternoon or evening, as your feet tend to accumulate fluid and swell throughout the day. What may have been comfortable earlier could now be tight.
- Not all shoes are created equally. The same shoe sizes can have different fits depending on the maker. Make sure to try several sizes to find the most comfortable shoe.
- Avoid buying shoes that you feel need a break-in period. Shoes should be comfortable from the first time you put them on.

- Select a running shoe store with knowledgeable staff who can provide advice on the shoe that best suits your activity, body structure and type of foot.
- Running shoes are an investment in your health. Better quality shoes may cost more but will pay off in terms of support and sturdiness. A mid-priced shoe may offer the best value.
- Most importantly, your running shoes must be comfortable – go for a short jog inside the store to test them out!
- And lastly, to prevent injury, don't forget to replace your runners every 400 to 600 miles or 6 months, whichever comes first.

Canada's chiropractors – here to help

Chiropractors can help you prevent running-related problems by assessing your gait, as well as the mobility of the joints in your feet, legs, pelvis and spine. Should you suffer stress and strain from running, a chiropractor can also provide treatment for your pain.

Fact: 80 per cent of Canadians will suffer from back pain in their lifetime. If required, a chiropractor can treat your pain through a variety of methods. These can include: spinal and joint adjustments, modalities such as ultrasound or TENS, soft tissue therapy and therapeutic exercises.

For more information or to locate a chiropractor near you, please visit the Canadian Chiropractic Association website www.chiropracticcanada.ca.

For runners, remember: Pick the shoe that's right for you.



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