



Why do you need running shoes?



Standing

The foot provides traction for movement, awareness of joint and body position for balance, and leverage for propulsion. Not only does the foot provide a base of support that allows adjustment to uneven surfaces, but also its motion decreases energy expenditure by contributing to the swing phase and stance phase of the gait cycle with dorsiflexion.



Walking

Walkers strike first with the heel and roll through the step. Runners, by contrast, strike in the midsole and need a built-up heel to soften the impact as well as a flared heel for stability. Walkers need neither of these things.



Running

Running and walking both move your body forward, but the mechanics are different. However, when you run, it is ideal to land on your mid-foot. This difference in the area of the foot that lands on the ground as you perform your physical activity increases the forces that are transmitted upwards through the legs the further you land on the foot.

Running shoes are specifically designed for running and for effectively absorbing or distributing the high-impact forces generated when your foot strikes the ground, which can be about 2.5 times your body weight. A good running shoe will provide adequate cushioning to handle the repeated stress of high-impact activity on your joints. Given these advantages, it is evident that running in an unsuitable pair of shoes can lead to a host of issues, especially over uneven surfaces and long distances. Some of the problems that can result from running in wrong footwear include pain in the feet during or after a run, injuries such as heel pain, shin splints, tendonitis. Shoes that are smaller can also cause bruising and blisters.



How to choose running shoes?

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Know your surface

There are different shoes suited for different surfaces.

Road



- For paved roads and surfaces with minor irregularities.
- Lightweight, flexible and smoother outsoles.
- Provides cushioning and optimal stability.

Trail



- For off-road surfaces.
- Sturdy outsoles with solid traction.
- Enhanced stability, support and protection.

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Purpose

You can also choose your running shoes according to your goals, ie, whether you need it to do your speed workouts, slow running, or for racing.



Light-weight shoes are preferable if you want to do speed workouts. You may even opt for racing flats or spiked shoes, which can be good for speed workout intervals and sprint training. Lightweight shoes, which are responsive, can be a good choice for race day. Racing shoes tend to have a lighter upper and lesser cushioning, reducing the weight and helping you run faster.



For slow, distance running shoes that are a little heavier with good cushioning, which is help in absorbing the high impact forces can help you stay on your feet longer.

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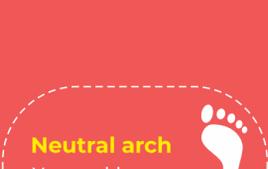
Feet type

Your arch height can affect the way your foot rolls (pronation).



Low arch

Your ankles probably overpronate.



Neutral arch

Your ankles probably have neutral pronation.



High arch

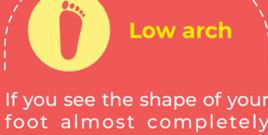
Your ankles probably underpronate.

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Determine your arch type

Wet test is a common test used for self-assessing the arch type. Here's how you go about doing it:

- You will need water, a shallow vessel/pan, and a blank piece of heavy paper.
- Add water to a shallow pan or vessel, large enough for you to stand in comfortably.
- Step into this pan or vessel and wet the sole of your foot.
- Once the foot is wet enough, step on to the piece of heavy paper kept beside the pan.
- Step off the paper and check the patten created.



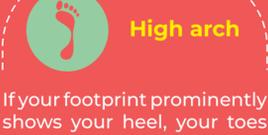
Low arch

If you see the shape of your foot almost completely filled in without any prominent inward curve in the center, you are likely to have low arches.



Normal arch

If the arch or the middle area of your footprint is roughly half-filled with a curve along the arch, you are likely to have normal arches.



High arch

If your footprint prominently shows your heel, your toes and the ball of your foot with little or no contact along the outside edge, you are likely to have high arches.

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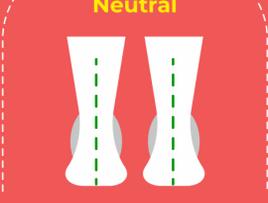
Pronation

Pronation is the natural movement of the foot and refers to the way the foot rolls upon landing during walking or running. Understanding your pronation is important in helping you find the right shoe.



Underpronation aka supination

In this type of pronation, the outer side of the heel strikes the ground at a greater angle and may have very little or negligible normal pronation. This tends to cause a higher transmission of shock through the lower leg. People with this type of foot pronation may feel pressure on their small toes on the outside of the foot.



Neutral

In this type of pronation, the foot lands on outside of the heel, and then it rolls inward, absorbing the shock/impact and supporting the body weight. During push-off, there tends to be even distribution of pressure from the front of the foot.



Overpronation

In this type of pronation, the foot lands on outside of heel and it then rolls inward excessively, shifting the weight to inner edge of the foot instead of the ball of the foot. As the foot twists with each step you take, the big and second toes tend to do most of the work.

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Determine your pronation - Wear test

One of the easiest ways to determine your pronation is the by the wear test. This is done by assessing the wear patterns on your shoe to see the impact of your feet.

- You will need a pair of running shoes that you have used and run in extensively.
- Look at the sole or the bottom of the shoes and check which area has the most wear.



Supination

Supination is indicated by excess wear on the outer side of the shoe, the side of the pinky toe.



Normal Pronation

Normal pronation is suggested by extra wear in the center of the sole, in the area under the ball of the foot and in the forefoot area.



Overpronation

Overpronation is indicated excess wear along the inner edge of the heel, under the ball of the foot, and under the big toe.

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Matching guide for your feet type

Feet type



Neutral arch

Pronation



Neutral

Shoe type



Neutral running shoe



Low arch



Overpronation



Stability or Motion control running shoes



High arch



Underpronation



Cushioned running shoe

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Buying new shoes? How to ensure they fit right?

One of the easiest ways to determine your pronation is the by the wear test. This is done by assessing the wear patterns on your shoe to see the impact of your feet.

Time of the day



Your feet tend to swell through the course of the day and hence it is recommended to buy shoes towards the end of the day.

Shoe size



As a general rule, choose a running shoe, which is half a size bigger than your normal shoe size. Your toes should have room to wiggle and your longest toe should have 0.5-inch space from the front of the shoe.

Wear with the gear



Try on running shoes while wearing your usual running socks. Depending on your preference the padding of the socks can affect the shoe fit. If you wear orthotics, bring them too while trying on shoes.

Comfort and fit



Make sure the fit is snug but not cause slippage, and not tight enough to cause discomfort. Stand and walk around in the shoes. Check the inside of the shoe for any rough spots or seams that may cause blisters.

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When should you replace your shoes?

As a rule of thumb, you should **consider replacing your shoes every 700km to 800km.**

Looks matter!

Look for obvious signs of wear and tear

- Worn out treads, especially on the soles.
- Excessive wear in the outside edges of the shoe or the front part of the shoe.
- Poor shock absorption and you can feel the impact with every step on feet and knees.



Terrain, running style, weight and weekly mileage are some of the factors that affect the longevity of your shoes.

Running surfaces is a significant factor that determines when you should change your shoes. It is recommended that you choose shoes suitable for the terrain you run on most often to prolong the life of your running shoes.

Your running style, which includes your gait and foot strike will influence the wear and tear of your shoes. Using shoes most appropriate for your foot type and running style will help reduce the wear and tear.