



SOUL MATES

FINDING THE RIGHT SHOES FOR YOUR FEET

Walking and running provides a balanced workout to the body's large muscle groups. It strengthens the cardiovascular system and encourages bones to remain dense. One of the great aspects of walking and running is the minimal amount of equipment required; in fact, the only crucial item is a good pair of shoes. The problem is that there are an overwhelming number of choices in athletic footwear and many injuries are related to improper shoe selection and fit. Several hundred tons of force will be transmitted through your feet during an average day of walking, and proper shoe selection is critical to your foot health and performance. So kick off your shoes and socks and take a moment to learn about your feet and shoe design.

1. Adidas Supernova Cushion, 2. Brooks Glycerin, 3. Reebok Premier Versatility, 4. Brooks Dyad, 5. Adidas Response Cushion, 6. Saucony Jazz, 7. Nike Air Zoom Spirit, 8. Adidas Climacool 2, 9. Saucony Trigon, 10. Nike Shox Ride.

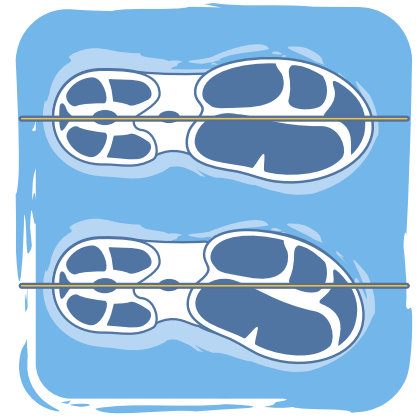
Take the Wet Test

Selecting the right shoe depends on your understanding of your foot type, that is, whether you have normal, low or high arches. You can take the "wet test" to determine your arch height. Wet your feet, then walk across a dark piece of cardboard or a sidewalk and then examine your footprint. Low arches will leave a broad imprint with only a slight in-flaring to the arch. High arches will leave a thin line connecting the ball of



your foot to your heel. Medium or normal arches will fall somewhere in between. The tendency of your foot to flatten out when walking is referred to as pronation. It is a normal process your foot goes through in order to absorb shock after heel strike.

Everyone pronates to some degree. Low arch people tend to pronate too much and have very flexible feet; high arch people don't pronate enough and have more rigid and inflexible feet.



Shoe Shape

Athletic shoes are made in three general shapes to correspond to arch heights: curved, semi-curved and straight. Drawing an imaginary line on the sole of your shoe from the center of the heel to the toes will help determine the shoe's shape. Straight lasted shoes will have a line which bisects the shoe almost perfectly. This shoe shape is best suited for the low arch foot. Curved designs show an inward curve to the sole and are best for high arch feet. Normal arches do well with semi-curved designs.

Shoe Construction

In concert with their shape, athletic shoes are constructed to either encourage or discourage pronation. They can be classified as either neutral cushion, stability or motion control shoes.

NEUTRAL CUSHION – for the High Arch Foot

These shoes are lightweight and flexible for the high arch foot which needs maximum cushion. These shoes are semi-curved or curved and are flexible through the midsole to allow the foot to move as much as possible which is helpful for the under-pronator. Examples of this shoe are: New Balance 879, Saucony Jazz.



STABILITY - for the Normal Foot

These shoes have a blend of good support on the medial (arch) side and good midsole cushioning. They are usually semi-curved and they help to keep the foot neutral through the gait cycle. They are best suited for the normal to mild over-pronators who need support and durability. Examples of this shoe are: Avia 2050, Saucony Grid Stabil, New Balance 764



Fit Tips

Beyond shape and design, the best shoe for your foot is the one that *fits* the best. Poor fitting shoes can cause blisters, corns, calluses, nerve impingement, ingrown toenails, claw toes, and bunions. Since shoe sizes vary from brand to brand, have your feet measured and be sure to fit your largest foot first. It is common for your shoe size to change as you age since your foot will elongate and spread with time. Wear your sport-specific socks and take your time when comparing various models. Take care that your heel fits snugly in the shoe and that you have a thumb-width of space for your longest toe at the end. If you have a narrow or wide foot, be sure to select brands that are made in widths, e.g., New Balance and Saucony. Shoes should feel comfortable right away and not need a break-in period.

1. Saucony Grid Motion 4,
2. Nike Air Max Moto,
3. Brooks Adrenaline,
4. Fila FGT 340 K1,
5. Saucony Omni,
6. Brooks GTS4,
7. Saucony Hurricane,
8. Nike Air Structure Triax,
9. Reebok Power Groove



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MOTION CONTROL – for the Low Arch Foot

These shoes are recommended for moderate to severe over-pronators who need the maximum amount of support in the rearfoot and midsole.

These shoes are straight lasted and usually have some external control features such as reinforced heel counters, medial wedges or dual density materials which are designed to control excessive pronation. Examples of these shoes are: New Balance 1122, Saucony Stabil MC, Brooks Ariel.



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Life of a Shoe

Shoes are too often worn long past their best performance. They may look to be in good shape on the outside, but the midsole loses 80% of its cushioning after 500-800 km. This means that if you walk or run 5km three times per week, you need to replace your shoes every 8 to 12 months. To extend the life of your shoes, it is best to have two pairs on the go. While you are wearing one pair, pull the inner soles out of the other to allow the shoes to air dry. Don't put your shoes in the dryer, in the sun, or near a heater. The heat will harden and dry the midsole materials and cause them to deteriorate sooner.

Good walking & running shoes are not cheap, but regularly replacing them is a small price to pay your foot health. «

- 1. Fila FGT 1000, 2. Saucony Stabil LE, 3. Adidas Synchro, 4. Adidas Supernova, 5. Saucony Stabil MC, 6. Adidas A3 Twinstrike, 7. Brooks Ariel, 8. Reebok Premier Road 9. Adidas A3 Control, 10. Adidas Cleopatra.