

Choosing a Running Shoe

By Dr. Boyd Williams
Certified Chiropractic Sports Physician

The first step in shopping for the proper shoe is to get a good fit. Most feet are of three shaped categories: straight, semi-curved or curved. A serious runner should have his/her foot type determined and buy the appropriately shaped shoe(s). Finding one's foot shape can easily be achieved by tracing out your foot on paper and taking the tracing with you when buying a new pair of shoes.

Another very important consideration when buying running shoes is your foot function. There are three possibilities: normal, over-pronation or over-supination. Causes of over-pronation and over-supination include: developmental abnormalities at birth, muscle weakness, excessive flexibility or muscle and postural abnormalities.

An athlete who pronates will roll the ankle inward, flattening out the long arch of the foot; leading to excessive wear on the inner side of the midsole and heel. This runner requires a type of shoe designed to control excessive inward motion, best accomplished by a solid heel counter, firm midsole and possibly an external control device built into the shoe to limit pronation. The athlete who supinates will roll the ankle outward placing more weight on the outside of the foot; causing excessive wear on the outer part of the midsole and heel. This type of foot does not absorb shock well and should use a shoe which has excellent shock absorbency and some lateral (outside) stability. If your shoes wear evenly, then your feet are probably functioning normally and shoes should be purchased based on their comfortable fit.

This article is by no means a complete guide to buying running shoes but it may be used as a tool to eliminate some trial and error when shopping for athletic shoes and should help avoid some common mistakes when considering proper shoe selection.

For more information on this or other health topics, including information about our services, go to www.familychiroclinic.org or call 281-4878.