10 tips for choosing athletic shoes

Exercise shoes affect your whole body, from your ankles, shins and knees to your back and hips. Great footwear will go a long way towards keeping you free from injury.

1. Pick the right shoe for the right activity.
   - Walking shoes are aimed at more serious walkers. These are more flexible, especially at the toes. It’s best to have a slightly undercut heel to aid walking technique. They should only be used for walking, as they’re not suitable for running.
   - Cross-country (trail) shoes have more grip and stability for use on surfaces off the road (or treadmill). They generally weigh more too.
   - Running shoes are the most common type of shoe you’ll come across. It is fine to run and walk in these.

2. Measure your foot often.
   - It’s a myth that foot size doesn’t change in adults. Sizes also vary between brands, so go by what fits, not by what size the shoe is. Measure your foot while standing.

3. Shop toward the end of the day.
   - Feet swell over the course of the day. They also expand while you run or walk, so shoes should fit your feet when they’re at their largest.

4. Bring your own socks, the ones you wear while running or walking.
   - If you wear orthotics, bring those too. Shoes need to fit with the orthotic inside.

5. Don’t believe in breaking in.
   - Running and walking shoes should feel comfortable right away. Try on both shoes and walk or run around the store a bit to make sure they feel good in action.

6. Use the rule of thumb.
   - There should be about 3/8 to 1/2 inch between the front of your big toe and the end of the shoe, about a thumb’s width. The heel should fit relatively tightly. Your heel should not slip out when you walk. The upper part of the shoe, which goes over the top of your foot, should be snug and secure, and not too tight anywhere. The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons writes that when fitting into an athletic shoe, you should be able to freely wiggle all of your toes when the shoe is on.

7. Understand the bells and whistles.
   - Clear inserts, filled with gel, Freon or air, provide extra shock absorption. These features are especially good for people who tend to get heel pain and not so good for people whose ankles twist easily as shoes with extra cushioning tend to provide less traction. Some shoes allow you to pump up the tongue, which lets people with hard-to-fit feet get a better fit.
1. **Don’t over or underpay.**
   - Good quality running and walking shoes can be fairly pricey, but are usually worth it. A $15 shoe will not be as good as an $80 shoe, but you’ll pay a premium for fashionable or celebrity styles, and they won’t be any better for your feet.

2. **Know when to replace them.**
   - The average pair of running shoes should be replaced after about 350-400 miles of use. Decide based on how your shoes look and feel. Once the back of the sole is worn out, or the shoe feels uncomfortable or less supportive, it’s time to replace those shoes.

3. **Know your feet.**
   Feet come in a variety of shapes and knowing your foot’s particular quirks is the key to selecting the right pair of shoes. Most major brands now offer a model to suit every foot type. One way to determine your foot’s shape is to do a “wet foot test.” Wet your foot, step on a piece of brown paper or a paper towel and trace your footprint.

### Flat Feet (Over Pronation):
Your wet foot shape will show your whole foot (the connection between heel and toes will be the whole width or even wider than your foot). Your feet roll inward. Your shoes show the most wear in the inside edge. Over pronation can create extra wear on the outside heel and inside forefoot. **Look for a shoe with good stability and maximum support.**

### High Arched Feet (Supination):
Your wet foot shape will have a very thin connection between heel and toes. Your feet roll outward. Supination causes wear on the outer edge of the heel and the little toe. **Look for a cushioned shoe that’s flexible with a soft mid-sole.**

### Neutral Feet:
Your wet foot shape will have a connection between your heel and toes which is about half the width of your foot. It is neither one of the above extremes. You’re lucky because you have the most choice! **Look for a shoe that has a combination of cushioning and support, but not too much of either.**
Shoe lacing techniques for common foot problems

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<th>Technique</th>
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<td><strong>If you have no problems,</strong> use a regular lacing style that goes back and forth in a crisscross or diagonal pattern.</td>
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<td><strong>If you have heel slippage,</strong> crisscross your laces normally. When you reach the top two sets of holes, called eyelets, form a “lace lock.” Come up through the lower eyelet then thread the shoelace down through the top eyelet on the same side, making a loop. Repeat on the other side. Next, cross the laces, pulling the ends of the shoelaces through the loops. Tighten and tie the shoelaces for a good fit.</td>
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<td><strong>If you have toe problems</strong> like hammer toes, corns or nail problems, lace your shoes to ease pressure.</td>
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Start one end of the shoelace at the top eyelet on the outside of the shoe and then pull the shoelace through the bottom eyelet on the other side. String the shoelace in a zigzag pattern across each set of eyelets to the top of the shoe. Tie the shoelaces.
| **If you have a high arch**, lace your shoe so that the shoelace travels in a straight line from eyelet to eyelet. By avoiding the crisscross, you remove pressure points on the tongue of the shoe which often causes pain to the top of the foot.  
  
Start by taking the ends of the shoelaces down through the eyelets closest to the toes.  
  
Next, bring one end of the lace up through the next eyelet on the same side then straight across and down through the second eyelet on the other side.  
  
Then, bring the other shoelace up through the third eyelet, straight across and down through the next eyelet open on the other side.  
  
Continue to bring the shoelace up through an eyelet, skipping an eyelet hole on the same side, while you bring the shoelace straight across and down, until the last set of eyelets. Tie the shoelaces. |

| **If you have a narrow heel and/or wide forefoot** use two sets of short shoelaces, one to lace from the middle toward the toes and the other from the middle toward the ankle.  
  
For a good heel fit with no slippage, use the “lace lock” technique at the top eyelets. See “heel slippage” on the previous page for more information. |

| **If you have pain on the top of your feet**, leave a space in the lacing to remove pressure.  
  
Start at the bottom and lace in a normal pattern to the point of pain. Then skip one eyelet and bring the shoelace up on the same side. Crisscross the laces through the last eyelets at the top of the shoe. Tie the shoelaces. |