



ACSM Information On...

Selecting and Effectively Using Running Shoes

Running shoes should be selected after careful consideration. With so many brands and styles of shoes on the market today, it is important to find the best fit for your feet and your needs.

A COMPLETE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAM

A well-rounded physical activity program includes aerobic exercise and strength training exercise, but not necessarily in the same session. This blend helps maintain or improve cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness and overall health and function. Regular physical activity will provide more health benefits than sporadic, high intensity workouts, so choose exercises you are likely to enjoy and that you can incorporate into your schedule.

ACSM's physical activity recommendations for healthy adults, updated in 2011, recommend at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity (working hard enough to break a sweat, but still able to carry on a conversation) five days per week, or 20 minutes of more vigorous activity three days per week. Combinations of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity can be performed to meet this recommendation.

Examples of typical aerobic exercises are:

- Walking
- Running
- Stair climbing
- Cycling
- Rowing
- Cross country skiing
- Swimming.

In addition, strength training should be performed a minimum of two days each week, with 8-12 repetitions of 8-10 different exercises that target all major muscle groups. This type of training can be accomplished using body weight, resistance bands, free weights, medicine balls or weight machines.

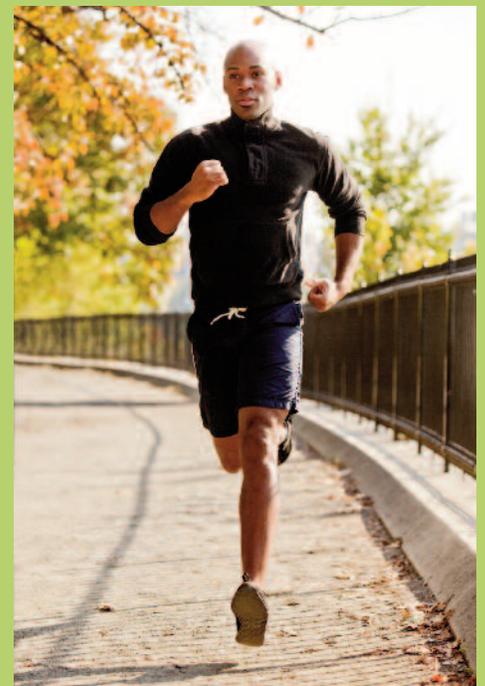
Consider the following when choosing a running shoes:

- Shoe size: the most common mistake in shoe selection is picking the wrong size. Be sure the shoe fits after break-in.
- Past experiences with shoes.
- Problems with your current shoes.
- Biomechanical needs (arch type, pronation, orthopedic injuries).
- Environmental conditions.
- Running and racing requirements.

FINDING A SHOE TO FIT YOUR FOOT CHARACTERISTICS

Carefully select shoes that fit the length and width of your feet. Determine what shoe shape you require based on your foot type. The wet test can be used to determine your foot type. Moisten your foot with water, and stand on any surface that will leave an imprint of your foot.

• **Normal Arch:** A normal foot has a normal-sized arch and leaves an imprint that has a flare but shows the forefoot and heel connected by a wide band. A normal foot lands on the outside of the heel then rolls inward (pronates) slightly to absorb shock. Runners with a normal foot and normal weight are usually considered biomechanically efficient. Stability shoes work best for a normal foot and normal arch.



• **Low Arch:** Flat feet have a low arch and leave a nearly complete imprint of the sole of the foot, indicating an overpronated foot that strikes on the outside of the heel and rolls inward excessively. Motion-control shoes work best for a flat foot with a low arch.



- **High Arch:** High-arched feet leave an imprint showing a very narrow band connecting the forefoot and heel. This type of foot is underpronated and is not an effective shock absorber. Cushioned shoes work for a rigid foot with a high arch.

Old shoes also show a pattern of wear that helps determine running style. Examine the soles of your shoes for a pattern of wear. Next, put your shoes on a table and look from the back of the shoe to the heel. If your shoe tilts to the inside, you may have a low arch. If your shoe tilts to the outside, you may have a high arch.

GUIDELINES FOR PURCHASING SHOES

Purchase running shoes from a good running shoe store or from someone knowledgeable about matching the correct type of shoe to your foot type and stride pattern. They can help you find the perfect fit that meets your needs.

Watch for shoes with excessive wear. Worn shoes often amplify a foot problem, and injuries can occur when a shoe is worn too long before it is replaced. Analyze the need to purchase new shoes based on the number of miles on your old shoes, not by the amount of tread left on the outer soles. Most estimates place mid-sole breakdown, and increased potential for injury, between 400-500 miles. For some, this means replacing shoes before they show major wear.

OTHER RUNNING SHOE CONSIDERATIONS

- Most people (85 percent) wear shoes that are too small. Shoe size varies among manufacturers. Have the shoe clerk help you select the correct shoe size. The shoe should have adequate room at the widest part of the foot. The shoe shouldn't be tight, but it shouldn't slide around either. Your heel should also fit snugly into the rear of the shoe.
- Try shoes on later in the day, and bring the socks you normally run in. Try on several pairs of shoes in the category closest to your foot type. Make sure you try on both shoes since the sizes of your feet can be slightly different, and keep them on your feet for about ten minutes to make sure they are comfortable. Most good stores will allow you to run up and down the block to experience what running will feel like in the shoes.
- Consider purchasing two pairs of running shoes. Alternating their use increases the life expectancy of each pair.
- Once you've purchased new shoes, run easily in the shoes for a short distance. It is important to allow sufficient time, between 60-70 miles, to break in the new pair.

After you have wisely selected your new running shoes, take them home, put them on and enjoy the run!

STAYING ACTIVE PAYS OFF!

Those who are physically active tend to live longer, healthier lives. Research shows that moderate physical activity – such as 30 minutes a day of brisk walking – significantly contributes to longevity. Even a person with risk factors like high blood pressure, diabetes or even a smoking habit can gain real benefits from incorporating regular physical activity into their daily life.

As many dieters have found, exercise can help you stay on a diet and lose weight. What's more – regular exercise can help lower blood pressure, control blood sugar, improve cholesterol levels and build stronger, denser bones.

THE FIRST STEP

Before you begin an exercise program, take a fitness test, or substantially increase your level of activity, make sure to answer the following questions. This physical activity readiness questionnaire (PAR-Q) will help determine if you're ready to begin an exercise routine or program.

- Has your doctor ever said that you have a heart condition or that you should participate in physical activity only as recommended by a doctor?
- Do you feel pain in your chest during physical activity?
- In the past month, have you had chest pain when you were not doing physical activity?
- Do you lose your balance from dizziness? Do you ever lose consciousness?
- Do you have a bone or joint problem that could be made worse by a change in your physical activity?
- Is your doctor currently prescribing drugs for your blood pressure or a heart condition?
- Do you know of any reason you should not participate in physical activity?

If you answered yes to one or more questions, if you are over 40 years of age and have recently been inactive, or if you are concerned about your health, consult a physician before taking a fitness test or substantially increasing your physical activity. If you answered no to each question, then it's likely that you can safely begin exercising.

PRIOR TO EXERCISE

Prior to beginning any exercise program, including the activities depicted in this brochure, individuals should seek medical evaluation and clearance to engage in activity. Not all exercise programs are suitable for everyone, and some programs may result in injury. Activities should be carried out at a pace that is comfortable for the user. Users should discontinue participation in any exercise activity that causes pain or discomfort. In such event, medical consultation should be immediately obtained.



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