

## More tips for finding the right running shoe

**Determine your shoe size.** Athletic shoe sizes can vary. It's always a good idea to have your foot measured since the shape of your foot changes over time. Also, shop at the end of the day when your foot is bigger.

**Get a comfortable fit.** Shoes should fit firmly in the heel to prevent slippage, and toes should have plenty of room to move. You should have enough space for the width of a finger (about 1/4 inch) to fit from the end of your longest toe (not necessarily your biggest toe) to the end of the shoe. Also, when buying shoes, bring the socks you plan to run in to get the best fit.

**Give shoes a test run.** Don't rush through the buying process. Spend 30-60 minutes trying on different shoes, and jog around the store wearing each pair for comparison.

**Try shoe shopping at a specialty running or fitness store.** Employees at specialty shops are often runners themselves and can offer good advice for picking out the right shoe.

**Don't overuse your running shoes.** Athletic shoes aren't cheap, but just as you have to replace your car tires due to wear and tear, you need to buy new running shoes every six months or every 400-500 miles.

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and

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# Selecting The Right Athletic Shoe



Sports Medicine



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# Selecting The Right Athletic Shoe



Because running puts a lot of stress on the feet and body, selecting the right athletic shoe is extremely important. Many common overuse injuries are related to improper shoes. Finding a shoe that fits your running style and foot shape will improve performance and prevent injuries.

## Understanding Pronation

Rotation of the foot inward when you land on the ground is called pronation. It is a normal process that helps absorb the shock of impact. Every runner pronates to a certain extent, but it can become a problem when it is excessive. When the feet roll too far inward, it is called overpronation. This can lead to common overuse injuries such as shin splints or knee pain.

A less common problem is underpronation. This occurs when the feet do not roll inward enough. Underpronation can lead to stress fractures, heel and knee pain and other injuries because the foot does not absorb impact well.

Many runners fall between these two extremes. This is called normal pronation.



## Know your foot type

Arch height is one of the factors that affects pronation. People generally have normal, low or high arches. To determine your arch height, wet your feet and step on a surface such as a dark piece of cardboard, a paper grocery bag or a sidewalk. Examine your footprint, and use the information below to establish your arch height

**Normal Arch = Normal Pronation**  
Feet with average arches leave an imprint where the arch flattens out, and there is a slight flare

**Low Arch = Overpronation**  
Feet with low arches leave an almost complete imprint with just a slight curve at the arch.

**High Arch = Underpronation**  
High-arched feet are generally less flexible. The arch doesn't flatten out, so the imprint will show a very narrow band connecting the front of the foot and the heel.



## Know your shoe types

The most important characteristic of a shoe is its shape. Running shoes generally come in three shapes: curved, semi-curved and straight. A shoe's shape can be observed by looking at the bottom of the shoe.

Another important part of a shoe is its last, or the form around which the shoe is built. There are two main types of lasts: slip and board. To check a shoe's last, look inside the shoe under the insole.

A shoe stitched down the middle is probably a slip-lasted shoe. These shoes are typically lighter weight and more flexible. If a shoe is stitched around the border, it is likely a board-lasted shoe. This type of shoe is heavier, more stable and best suited for controlling pronation.

Some shoes use both slip and board lasts. These shoes provide balance in weight, flexibility and pronation control.

## Putting it all together to find the right shoe

Follow these guidelines to select the best shoe for your foot shape and level of pronation:

### Normal Pronation = Stability

Shape: Semi-curved

Last: Combination

Stability: Look for features that help reduce overpronation like a medial post (a stiff material on the inner side of shoe)

### Overpronation = Motion Controlled

Shape: Straight

Last: Board

Stability: Medial post, firm heel counter (stiff shoe)

### Underpronation = Cushioned (Neutral)

Shape: Curved

Last: Slip

Stability: No additional support needed (flexible shoe)