

RUNNING SHOES: FINDING THE RIGHT FIT

With all the different makes and models of running shoes, it's no wonder people have a difficult time finding the shoe that's right for them. Everyone's feet are shaped and sized differently, so what might feel comfortable for one person, might feel uncomfortable for the next. The first step in finding the right shoe is to determine your foot type.

What is my foot type?

When you step, your foot first contacts the ground on the outside of your heel (supination) and then rolls to the inside of your foot (pronation). As your weight continues forward and your heel comes off the ground, the foot rolls to the outside again. Most people do not walk perfectly and tend to put more of their body weight on either the inside or the outside of their foot when they walk. If your foot leans too far to the outside when you walk, it is called over-supination. If your foot leans too far to the inside, it is called over-pronation.

You probably over-supinate if:

- you have a tendency to walk on the outside of your foot
- you have a high arch (even after putting weight on your foot)
- the bottom of your shoe is more worn on the outside

You probably over-pronate if:

- you have a low arch (when putting weight on your foot)
- your ankle rolls inward when you walk
- you have calluses under your big toe or ball of your foot
- the sole of your shoe is worn out on the inside

Some people just slightly pronate or supinate. If you can't tell if you pronate or supinate, you probably have a fairly neutral foot.

What is the right shoe for me?

Once you've identified your foot type it's time to find the right shoe. If you're a pronator, you'll need a shoe that will provide some degree of motion control and stability. A shoe that is too flexible will not give you the support that you need. For supinators, a shoe with good cushioning is important.

There are 3 main features of a shoe that you need to consider when selecting a running shoe: shape, type of construction, and midsole.

SHAPE

Shoes are built on either a curved-last or a straight-last. Look at the bottom of your shoe and draw a straight line from the middle of the heel to the top of the shoe (as if you were slicing the shoe in half). If the shoe has a curved-last, the line will not pass through the tip of the shoe. Instead, you will see that the shape of the shoe has a curved appearance. The right side of the shoe will not look the same as the left. If you have a straight-lasted shoe, the line that bisects the heel will run through the tip of the shoe. The right half of the shoe will look about the same as the left half. A perfectly straight-lasted shoe is not that common but you will notice that some shoes are straighter than others. If you supinate, you might

RUNNING SHOE ANATOMY

Shape of Shoe



Straight-lasted shoe



Curved-lasted shoe

Shoe Construction



Board

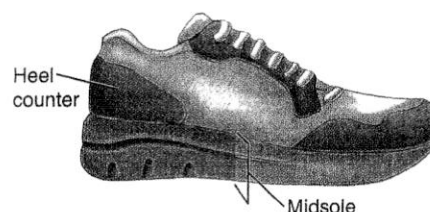


Slip



Combination

Type of Midsole



Dual-density midsole



Single-density midsole