
The Bottom Line - Footwear

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Does it matter what shoes I wear?

Running long distances involves repetitive pounding stress on the legs and feet. Your feet bear the brunt of each step. Depending on your running efficiency and the type of surfaces you run on, your legs are subjected to stresses of up to 2.5 times your body weight. Proper footwear may help reduce these stresses.

What shoes should I wear?

If you are running regularly, invest in a pair of running shoes, rather than use your tennis shoes or cross-trainers. Running shoes are designed to cope with forward movements. There are many brands, models and shoe types, designed for different needs and feet types. They include cushioning shoes for people with high-arched feet, stability shoes for people who are mildly over-pronating, (flat feet) and motion control shoes for people with flat feet. Ask your physiotherapist, or podiatrist for advice.

What should I consider when buying shoes?

Here are some tips:

- Comfort is most important. Your feet should feel supported and cushioned, without areas that pinch or rub.
- Wear both sides and run about in the shop to see how the shoes will feel when you run.
- Always go shopping for your shoes in the late afternoon when feet swell the most.
- Shoes have their own lifespan. Generally, they last for about 500 miles of running, or anything from three to six months, depending on how much distance you cover.
- To enhance the lifespan of your shoes, have at least two pairs so that you can use them alternately.