

Finding the Running Shoe for You

This handout should be intended for educational purposes. Whether you are just getting into running or you're a "long time listener, first time caller", buying shoes can at times bring about anxiety. It's confusing and many people have heavy opinions for their shoes or against other shoes. Let's discuss some anatomy of the shoe, terms you should know, and tenets to picking the right shoe. Let's break these down into individual portions so that you come out feeling more confident about the shoe buying process.

Anatomy of the Shoe

- 1 - **Upper:** wraps around the foot. Typically made of mesh or breathable material with possible overlays.
- 2 - **Midsole:** commonly plastic like materials that act like foam/rubber. Usually dictates the durability and type of shoe. Cushioning and pronation control are usually here.
- 3 - **Outsole:** usually rubber and allows for traction. Can dictate how soft or firm the shoe feels along with rotational stiffness.



Terms You Need to Know

- 1 - **Stack Height:** difference between shoe upper and the ground.
- 2 - **Shoe Drop:** difference between height of heel and forefoot.
- 3 - **Toe Box Width:** difference between widest part of the forefoot. Should be roomy to allow foot to expand.
- 4 - **Heel Collar:** foam cloth padding that surrounds rearfoot. Should be firm but comfortable to hold heel firmly.
- 5 - **Rearfoot:** containing more of the heel
- 6 - **Midfoot:** containing more of the middle of the foot
- 7 - **Forefoot:** containing more of the toes



Click [Here](#) to See How to Make a Runner's Loop

Tenets of Shoe Buying



Tenet 1: 'The Cinderella Effect' - **find the shoe that is right for YOU.** When picking a new shoe or your next shoe, make sure the shoe feels comfortable on the foot.

Tenet 2: Don't fit to the shoe, let the shoe fit to you. Don't go for fads. **Go off what has worked well in the past** if you have bought shoes previously. If you want to test a new shoe, allow for ample warming up to this and ideally in the offseason.

Tenet 3: **Have more than one pair while training** to allow for variable loads applied to the body. A 2015 study showed this can possibly reduce running-related injuries (RRIs) by 39%.

Tenet 4: **Make sure the different pairs of shoes are not wildly different.** An example would be having a 0mm shoe drop (Altra) and a 12mm shoe drop (Brooks) or a minimalist shoe (Vivo/Vibrams) and maximalist shoe (Hoka).

Tenet 5: **Fit the shoe to the longest toe,** make sure the heel collar fits snug around the heel, and try them at the end of the day due to feet swelling as the day goes on.

Tenet 6: Test them out! Most stores have great return policies. **Take advantage of this.**

Shoe Assessments

Underlined terms are hyperlinked to Youtube videos to illustrate

General Shoe Inspection Test - looking over the shoes for any major factory defects. This can be done for new and old pairs (common wear patterns) of shoes

Insole Test - inspecting to make sure foot is fully supported and not overflowing over the shoe

Break Test - checking to see where the break pattern in the shoe is to match where your foot breaks during push off phase of gait

Stress Test - in regards to the stiffness from front to back along with rotational or torsional stiffness.

Sometimes stiffness in the shoe can help some coming back from injury if mechanics are a bit 'loose'

Hot Spots Test - checking inside the shoe for any parts that feel may cause excess friction or pressure

Final Thoughts & How to Find Me

- Higher stack heights are typically called **Maximalist (Hokas)** and are regarded as highly cushioned compared to lower stack heights being called **Minimalist (New Balance Minimus)**.
- **Rule of thumb:** closer to 0mm drop loads more foot/calf, higher drops loads more hip and knee
- The shoe doesn't make you a better runner. **Your smart training and recovery** make you a better runner in the shoe.
- Covering these concepts, how biomechanics and more can lead to your pain, and mapping a strategy to create your comeback story. It's all a click away at www.moderndaychiro.com