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# Buying proper shoes can prevent the agony of de-feet

A few years back, a popular athletic footwear company went miles with the catch-phrase "It's gotta be the shoes." While a pair of shoes may not actually instill athletic talent, it's pretty obvious that a poor pair will impede an athlete's progress. With so many companies making so many different shoes, it's often difficult to find the one that's right for your exercise regimen.

Of course, certain sports like baseball, football, basketball and golf all have specific shoes designed for players. But if you're working out at home on a treadmill, cross-training, aerobic dancing or training for a marathon, you're faced with dozens of choices. Here are some tips to get your feet into the right fit.

If you're into the hard-impact sports like running or high-impact aerobics, motion control and stability are the most important factors when choosing a shoe. Look for shoes that have a medial post and a dual-density midsole, and that provide extra heel cushioning. If you have arch problems, motion-control shoes with high arches are recommended.

For light aerobics, walking or indoor exercising, a cushioned or light training shoe should do the trick. Choose pairs with gel-sole cushioning, and if possible, a deep heel counter.

When shopping for shoes, treat your feet to the very best you can afford. Visit at least three quality stores that specialize in athletic shoes, and don't be shy about asking questions. By all means, never buy the first pair that feels right; try on various brands at various places.

When you find a pair that interests you, keep them on for 10 or 15 minutes and walk around the store, even jump up and down in them a bit. Don't worry, the salesperson has probably seen all manner of shoe testing; you won't be the first to have done jumping jacks in the middle of the sock aisle.

Look closely at the shoes while they're on your feet. Do you see the outline of your toes around the top? If so, even if they feel good, you should probably go with a longer or wider pair. Your feet move around a lot in your shoes during exercise, so an athletic shoe needs to fit a tad loosely. It's also good advice to wear the type of socks you normally wear while working out; they help when determining fit around the heel area.

If you can, stock up when you find just the right shoe. Shoe companies change styles constantly and the next pair may not be as easy to find. Which leads to the next question: Just how do you know when it's time to retire an old pair of shoes? Even though they may still feel comfortable, shoes that have lost their stability and shock absorption could actually lead to injury.

Running experts say that shoes should be tossed after approximately 350 miles for light shoes and 500 miles for heavier motion-control styles. Examine the soles and heels of your old shoes to see where the most wear has occurred and look for extra padding in those areas when selecting new ones.

—By Daniel Aspell, special

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