

Plenty can, and does go wrong, when it comes to feet

When buying new walking shoes, don't let the category of "running" scare you away.

While fitting shoes at Feet in Motion, we hear it all the time: "I don't need a running shoe, I don't run!"

The truth is the running category of athletic shoes is where you'll find some of the most technically advanced footwear, providing support, cushioning and stability.

Whether you are starting a walking program, or you are on your feet all day at work, you can benefit from a supportive running shoe. If you suffer from pain in your heel, forefoot, arch and even your knees, running shoes may help you.

We always recommend that a medical professional like a podiatrist or a chiroprapist be seen to identify the specific problem. In most cases it is something simple and easily treated or if more serious, the sooner the problem is detected the better. You only have two feet to carry you through a very long life, treat them with respect and don't let irritating pains go untreated.

With 26 bones in each foot, your feet contain 25% of the bone in your entire body; a lot can, and does, go wrong.

One of the more common feet problems we often see is plantar fasciitis, a tearing or inflammation of the plantar fascia which is a thin flat tendon that runs from the heel under the foot to the toes. As arches fall over time, the fascia tendon can be damaged and small tears occur in the heel at the attachment point and can cause excruciating pain under the heel, most often felt first thing in the morning when stepping out of bed.

Lack of support in footwear can also lead to pain in the arch area of the foot and up into the knees. This makes sense when you think of the foot flattening out or rolling inwards, medically known as over-pronation. This movement can change the angle of the knees dramatically and puts a strain on joints, ligaments and tendons that compensating for the changes in the feet.

Achilles tendonitis is a tearing or inflammation of the Achilles tendon which attaches the calf muscles to the back of your heel. Often associated with having worn high heeled shoes, a running shoe, having a little thicker cushioning in the heel can alleviate some of the pain.

Forefoot pain, often referred to as Morton's neuroma typically is a result of a fallen metatarsal arch which is the arch across the ball of your foot. When this arch falls the toes can splay, nerves can become pinched and cause pain under the forefoot and between the toes.

Footwear manufactures such as New Balance, Saucony, Brooks and Asics typically divide the running category into three general types of shoes; Motion Control shoes, stability shoes, and neutral



or cushioned shoes.

The motion control shoe is the most supportive and is designed for someone with a very flexible foot that will often over pronate and may have fallen arches. This shoe often fits well with the person who suffers from plantar fasciitis. The support is built into the medial side (inside) of the shoe and is designed to support the arch during the gait cycle. The shoe is generally firm and flat, built to control the excessive motion of a flexible foot that needs additional support.

The largest category is the stability shoe and is similar to the motion control shoe in that the support is built into the medial side to support the arch area. However, this medial support is not as aggressive as the motion control shoe. A large portion of the population falls into wearing a shoe from this category. This shoe is flexible, very cushioned and still supportive. This shoe would be excellent for anyone with fallen arches, who is standing or walking a lot, and has sore feet by the end of the day.

The neutral or cushioned shoe is designed for the neutral arch to the high arched foot. People with high arches can

also under-pronate, (roll out) however, only a small percentage of the population actually do this. They generally have rigid feet, meaning there is not much flex or movement in the foot as it rolls through the gait cycle. As the foot rolls off the balls of the foot the pressure is most likely on the middle to outside of the forefoot. The neutral or cushioned shoe allows the more rigid foot to flex as much as possible and provides good cushioning for the feet.

So how do you know what type of feet you have? There are many tests to determine what foot type you have, however you're best to visit a medical professional or a trained staff member at a shoe store that focuses on proper fittings for the most accurate advice.

When visiting a shoe store that provides proper fittings there are a few things that should be done each time you go.

The staff should measure each foot, ask if you have any pains, foot problems, determine orthotic use, and they may even watch you walk to see the movement in the feet. Leave 30 minutes or more for the fitting process. You should be offered a few different brands as each manufacturer and model will fit slightly different. There is no one right shoe for everyone; it takes time to find the best one for you.

So don't let those running shoes scare you away, the look can be fashionable and their additional support, cushioning and stability can lead to many pain free miles of smiles!

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