

Team JDRF to Cure Diabetes

Selection and Care of Running Shoes

By Jeff Galloway and Kirk Larsen

1. Be prepared to spend at least 30 minutes in selecting your running shoes.
2. Do not take a friend's advice, as what works for them may not be right for you.
3. Bring your current pair of running shoes and a pair of your running socks.
4. Make sure you get a salesperson who asks you about your running, including goals, mileage, terrain, past or current injuries, and chronic problem areas. Try to get a salesperson that is a runner him or herself.
5. Your salesperson should watch you run in a neutral pair of shoes to determine your specific foot function and biomechanics, and make recommendations based on their observations.
6. The salesperson should watch you in the recommended shoes to verify the correctness of each model for you.
7. Running shoes are designed with specific features that are intended to work for certain foot functions (floppy, rigid, etc). Remember that foot function is not the same as foot type. For instance, having a flat foot (commonly known as fallen arches) does not indicate that you have a "floppy" foot that rolls inward excessively and needs a motion control shoe (this is a common misunderstanding that we often encounter).
8. The fit should be comfortable, meaning snug but not tight. There should be a little wiggle room in the forefoot. When standing, allow about a thumb's width between your toes and the end of the shoe. There is no consistency to running shoe sizing. In general, you'll tend to need a larger size than your dress shoe size. It is okay for women to wear men's shoes and men to wear women's if it helps you get a better fit (as a general rule, there is a size and a half difference, so, a size 11 in women's would be a men's 9).
9. The two equally important variables in shoe selection are that the shoe fits your foot well AND is appropriate for your foot function.
10. As a general rule, try on at least a couple of different models for comparison.
11. Don't write off a shoe company because one of their models didn't work for you in the past.
12. Tune out the advertising hype. Shoe enhancers (air, gel, etc.) should be viewed as icing on the cake. Companies can't make a poorly designed or manufactured shoe good all on their own, and if the shoe is well designed and manufactured it will be good even without an enhancer.
13. Never let cosmetics be a significant factor in your decision.
14. The cushioning in a running shoe lasts, on average, 400 to 600 miles. However, the shoes will have a progressive breakdown over time whether being used or not. Your body and feet will let you know when the shoe is no longer providing the cushion and support needed.
15. If you feel compelled to wash your running shoes, DO NOT immerse them in water. Use a damp cloth or an old toothbrush and let the shoes air-dry.

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16. Keep running shoes away from heat sources. Do not put them in dryers, on radiators or heating vents, or nuke them in the microwave. Do not leave them in your car or out in the direct sunlight in hot weather. Heat will prematurely dry out the cushioning materials and can cause the shoe to separate by hardening the glues that hold it together.

17. Do not let the outer sole wear through to the midsole material. If you notice the outer sole wearing down, use a urethane-type product like Freesole, ShoeGoo, or Eternal Sole to extend the life of the outer sole until you've reached the 400-600 mile range of effective midsole cushioning (see #14).

18. Remember, the most expensive shoe purchase you can make is the one where you buy a pair that does not fit properly and/or is not right for your foot function.

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