

# How to Choose the Right Running Shoe for You!

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Looking for a running shoe can be very overwhelming if you don't know what you are looking for.

There are so many different running shoes with so many different types of technology. Each of these shoes are built for different foot types.

The best running shoe is the shoe that feels the most comfortable on your foot and fits your foot the best.

So how do you go about finding that perfect shoe? There are 6 simple steps for you to follow.

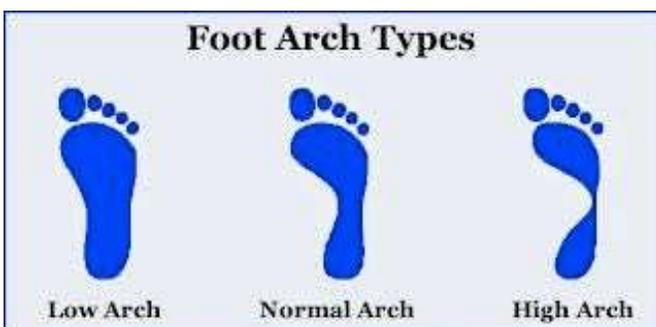
## Step 1: Understand Pronation

Pronation is the rolling of the foot from heel to toe through the foot strike. A proper or neutral foot strike pattern is initially striking with the outside of the heel and moving up to the ball of your foot evenly. This is how your foot reduces the stress of impact.

Over-pronation is what it is called when you roll too much to the inside of your foot during your foot strike cycle. This normally happens when you have a low arch or flat foot.

Under-pronation (supination) is when your foot rolls too much to the outside. This typically happens if you have a high arch.

## Step 2: Determine Your Foot Type



In order to determine your foot type, the easiest way is to check your arch height by taking the "wet test"

To do this, wet both feet and stand on a paper bag for about 10 seconds. Then step off of the bag and observe the imprint your foot made on the bag.

### You have a normal arch if:

There is a distinct curve along the inside of your foot with a band a little less than half the width of your foot connecting the heel and toe.

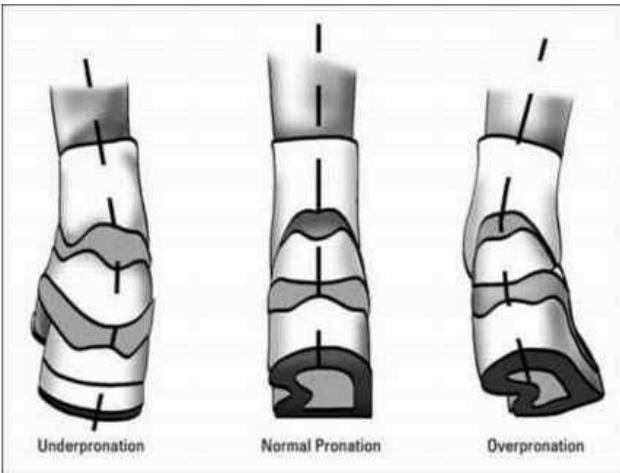
### You have a low arch if:

The imprint shows most of your foot and there is not much of a curve along the inside of your foot.

### You have a high arch if:

There is a very noticeable curve along the inside of your foot and a very thin band connecting your heel and toe. If you have a really high arch, you may not even see anything connecting the heel and toe.

## Step 3: Determine Your Gait



Now that you know your arch height, you can use this information to determine your gait; which is really just a fancy way of saying the way your feet behave when you run.

Determining your gait is a very important step in this process because you want to choose the shoe that best accommodates your gait type.

There are four basic gait types:

1. **Severe over-pronation:** This is when your heel strikes the ground first and then rolls inward excessively. When someone over-pronates, their ankle does not have the ability to stabilize the body properly. This is typically someone with a flat foot or severely low arch. The best shoe type for an over-pronator is a motion control shoe.
2. **Mild over-pronation:** This is when the outside of the heel strikes first and the foot then rolls inward slightly absorbing the shock. This is typically someone with a low to medium arch and they should choose a stability shoe.
3. **Neutral:** If you have a neutral gait, the middle/slightly outward part of the heel strikes first and the foot rolls inward slightly absorbing the shock. Someone with a neutral gait normally has a medium arched foot. The best shoe choice for a neutral runner is a neutral cushioning shoe.
4. **Under-pronation (supination):** Someone who supinates, strikes the ground with the outside of their heel first and instead of rolling inward, stays on the outside of their foot through the entire foot strike. This inhibits the foot's ability to absorb the impact of the foot strike. This is typically someone with a higher arched foot and should choose a neutral cushioning shoe as well.

## Step 4: Choose the Right Running Shoe for You!

Now that you have established your arch type and gait, you are ready to find a shoe that fits your particular needs. There are two ways to determine the type of shoe. First, look at the shape of the shoe.

**Motion control shoes:** These shoes are built on a straight last. Turn the shoe over and look at the bottom. If it has a wide, straight shape it is a motion control shoe. If you have a flat foot and over-pronate, this is the shoe you want. This type of shoe will prevent you from rolling in too far. It will give your foot maximum support and offers the most control.

**Stability shoes:** Stability shoes will have a semi-curved shape to them. If you have a normal arch, and pronate only slightly, choose a stability shoe. Stability shoes offer a good balance of cushioning and support.

**Neutral cushioning shoes:** Neutral cushioning shoes will have the most curved shape to them. If you have a high arched foot and supinate, you should choose a neutral cushion shoe. Cushioned shoes absorb the impact that your foot does not naturally absorb.

Along with looking at the shape of the shoe, there is one other "cheat sheet" that the shoe itself offers. To gain stability in a shoe, not only do the manufactures use a wider last, but they use a dual density foam on the inside of the shoe to prevent you from rolling in and keep your foot at a neutral stride.

If you look at the inside of the shoe, you will see either a darker color or speckled foam. If the **discoloration is just in the middle near the arch, it is a mild stability shoe**. If the **dense foam starts at the beginning of the arch and wraps all the way around to the back of the heel, it is a motion control shoe**. Finally, if there is **no dense foam on the inside, it is a neutral cushion shoe**.

## Types of Shoes Motion – Stability – Neutral



Motion Control



Stability Shoe



Neutral Cushioning



### Step 5: Go to Your Local Running Store

Now that you have an idea of what type of shoe you are looking for, here are some tips that will make your trip to the running shoe store a little easier.

1. Take your old shoes to show the salesperson
2. Wear or ask about buying the right kind of socks to run in (Good socks make all the difference)
3. Do Not just buy the latest and greatest shoe. Find what fits YOU the best.
4. Have the salesperson measure BOTH feet. One foot is almost always slightly bigger. You want to fit the bigger foot so you don't lose toenails on your run.

Before you even try on any shoes, the salesperson should ask you, at minimum, the following questions.

- a) How long have you been running?
- b) What have you run in in the past? Did you like them?
- c) Where do you do most of your running?
- d) How many miles a week would you say you average?
- e) Are you aware of any foot problems (ie over-pronation, flat feet, high arch, etc)

Based on your answers to these questions, the salesperson will be able to direct you to a few models of shoes that fit your specific needs.

## **Step 6: Try on and Ensure Proper Fit**

Trying on the shoes is the last step. Different companies use different technologies to achieve the same goal, so try on a few different pair to compare the feel.

When trying on the shoes there are a few things to look for.

1. Make sure you have enough room in the toe. A good general rule is to have about a thumbs width between the top of your toe and the end of the shoe.
2. Make sure there is enough room in the width. You want the shoe tight enough that your foot is not sloppy in it, but you want enough room for your foot to spread out and allow for swelling when you run.
3. Run on a treadmill or do a few laps around the store to make sure there are no hot spots or slipping in the heel.

If you follow these simple steps when looking for a new running shoe, not only will you avoid an overwhelming shopping experience, but you will have a shoe that fits your specific needs and will make running that much more enjoyable