

## **WELLNESS UPDATE 2007, #1**

### **SHOE SELECTION**

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As spring sports begin, both recreational and competitive athletes are gearing up to slip on their running shoes and get outdoors. Selecting the appropriate shoe for your foot is important in the prevention of chronic, repetitive injury to the soft tissue of your foot, early shin splints, and hip/knee pain.

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The first important step in determining the right shoes is **knowing your foot type**. There are three common types of feet: a **high arch** foot or rigid foot, a **normal foot** with appropriate arch height, and a **flat foot** or a floppy foot. To accommodate these types of feet, most shoe companies fabricate three different types of running shoes: cushioned shoes, stability shoes, and motion control shoes. Determining your foot type via your standing posture or gait is important in picking the right shoe. Next, shoes are made of different foam densities that help control your pronation, or flat foot, and provide additional stability. It is important to **observe the construction of the heel and midsole to determine how much support they provide**. The **support and shock absorption in the heel and midsole of shoe are decreased by 40-50% by running in wet shoes**. If shoes become wet through sweat or rain, it is important to wait 24-36 hours before wearing them again to allow the midsole material to reform.

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You should **replace your shoes every 400-600 miles, or 6 months, because after 300 miles shoes lose more than 50% of their shock absorption**. Shock absorption helps in reducing the stress on the soft tissue including the tendons and ligaments. **One suggestion is to switch between two pairs of shoes and work out in a different pair of shoes each day to increase the midsole lifespan**. Examining the midsole of the shoe for excessive wrinkles or compression of the sock liner is helpful in determining shoe life.

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Finally, it is always a good choice to purchase your running shoes from a specialty store to ensure proper fit and appropriate selection. Remember to **bring your running socks and any orthotics to the store to ensure you get the best fit.** You can also consult with a local physical therapist or athletic trainer for appropriate gait analysis or injury consultation to get you ready for an injury free spring season!

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*Physiotherapy Associates are the sports medicine providers for the Boys' State Basketball Tournament.*