

Foot Type: Which Athletic Shoe Do I Choose?

By: Kirk M. Contento, DPM, Past President and Member of the IPMA

When looking for an athletic shoe to fit your foot properly, the first thing you should know is what type of foot you have.

A pronated foot, or a foot which flattens out too early in the gait cycle will feel more comfortable in a shoe with a straight last and a roomy toe box. An easy way to evaluate the last is to turn the shoe over and see if it curves toward the midline or away from the midline. The shoe "last" is the foundation and shape of the shoe and sole. The last can easily determine what and how the function of the foot will do while in the shoe. This is a curved last shoe and will only torment a pronator. A straight last shoe will look straight on the bottom or a line bisecting the heel of the shoe will end up bisecting the front of the shoe. To evaluate the toe box, observe if the shoe narrows from top to bottom as it extends to the end of the toes. This shoe will also not make a pronator happy. Some examples of straight last pronator friendly shoes are Saucony, Adidas, New Balance. Avia and some Brooks.

A supinated, cavus or high arched foot which does not pronate (or minimally pronates) will lavish a curved last shoe such as Nike, Reebok, or Fila. Remember to try on the shoes for size later on in the day when your feet are a little swollen. Also remember that different brands and models will be sized differently, so you may vary even in that respect.

			
	The Normal Foot	The Flat Foot	The High Arched Foot
FOOT DESCRIPTION	Normal feet have a normalized arch and leave an imprint that has a flare but shows the forefoot and heel connected by a wide band.	Flat feet have a low arch and leave a nearly complete imprint. That is, the imprint looks like the whole sole of the foot.	High arched feet leave an imprint showing a very narrow band connecting the forefoot and heel
FOOT CHARACTERISTICS	A normal foot lands on the outside of the heel, and then rolls inward (pronates) slightly to absorb shock. Runners with a normal foot and normal weight are usually considered biomechanically efficient and don't require motion control shoes.	This imprint usually indicated an overpronated foot that strikes on the outside of the heel and rolls inward (pronates) excessively. Over time, this can cause many different kinds of overuse injuries.	A curved, high arched foot is generally termed an underpronated foot. This type of foot doesn't pronate enough, so it's not an effective shock absorber.
BEST LAST	Semi-curved.	Straight or semi-curved.	Curved.
BEST SHOES	Stability shoes with moderate control features such as a two density mid sole.	Motion control shoes or stability shoes with firm midsoles and control features that reduce the degree of pronation. Stay away from highly cushioned shoes and go for ones that offer stability and control.	Cushioned shoes with plenty of flexibility to encourage foot motion. Stay from motion control or stability shoes that reduce foot mobility.

Foot Type:
Which Athletic Shoe Do I Choose?